

Eckhart Tolle Retreat Talk Titled Awakening out of thought

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 3:07:28)

Welcome, I should say welcome in many languages, so many nationalities here. So some of you have come a long way, traveled a long distance, to be with yourself. And sometimes that's how it works.

To be with yourself, I don't mean the self that is such a burden to carry. You may be carrying that also, but that's not why you've come here. But something deeper than the story or the conceptual self in the head that needs and wants something.

Of course that's also come with you here, the self that needs or wants something. And it may be expecting to get it here, to add something to itself. But that's not how it works.

So I sometimes use the expression portals, openings into yourself, a new state of consciousness, one could say, unconditioned. And portals are here all the time. One could consider our entire retreat as a portal into that state of consciousness that we may call presence.

So the retreat is not here to add anything to you. One could almost say it's here to remove something. Not even that.

To show something that's already there. And the teaching, to use that word, it's not really any teaching, the totality of this weekend, long weekend, is the teaching. The words are not that important.

While we sit here in this beautiful space, you may be a little tightly packed in the back, maybe tomorrow we can move forward a little bit more. But while we sit in this beautiful space, always remember, and I will keep reminding you, so that you don't get attached only to the words, to pay attention to this. This is one important portal that is here.

To pay attention to the silent space that is here. It's here in this room, so while we sit here, there's always the dimension of silence or silent space. And all that's required of you, for it to become a portal, is to pay attention to it.

It does not mean that you cannot pay attention to the words. You listen, the words are there, they go in. But as you listen, you also listen to the silence.

And the mind, the thinking mind, might say, this doesn't make sense, because listening to the silence, there's nothing to listen to. All that's required is simply to acknowledge, to pay attention, to notice the silence. To the thinking mind, that is not a significant event.

It is a non-event. It is a non-happening. It is completely uninteresting, has no fascination whatsoever, and adds nothing to who you are.

That's why the mind-made self, the heavy self that you carry with you, is not interested in it, and can't even do that. In other words, you cannot listen to silence through thought. The moment you notice the silent space, the stream of thinking ceases, and you haven't lost consciousness.

That's why we are here. That is one portal that is opening up. There's only one thing here to learn, and it's not even learning, because learning would imply that you need to absorb something new.

There's only one thing here to discover. And in many of you, probably most of you, that has already emerged, which I sometimes call the unconditioned consciousness, the state of presence, or more recently I've been calling it space consciousness, as opposed to object consciousness. Most humans in this world know only object consciousness, and are identified with object consciousness, react.

Object consciousness is anything that takes on form. Thought is a form, a thought form, an object in consciousness. Every sense perception is an object in consciousness.

Object consciousness, the words that you hear, are object consciousness forms. The silent space has no form, can't grasp it. Space consciousness, that dimension of depth or stillness that is already in you, and in many, I know that, that has already emerged, although it may get obscured from time to time.

Total absorption in object consciousness, thought, reactions, me, and you yourself become an object to yourself, a mind made me with its story. You have made yourself into an object in consciousness, an uneasy entity. And that uneasy entity is also here.

The reason why you are here is that something else has emerged, which one could call a new consciousness on this planet, because it's been so rare until, even now it's still rare, but until recently, it's been so rare for that dimension to be realized in a human being. And suddenly now, many people are beginning to realize it. It's still rare, relatively speaking, relative to the population on the planet.

But in more humans, it is emerging already. And you may not even know that this is why you've come here. But the self, the object consciousness me, has also traveled here.

And it may have its own agenda here. It wants something, because it is never enough, never complete, never fulfilled for except short intervals between two wantings, or two fears, and two not enoughs. So that, that self, that what is traditionally called the self, in Buddhism, that is called the self, has come with you.

And of course, wherever you go, it would travel with you also. And it won't leave you alone for too long. And it's back, I'm still here.

And that is that part in you that, after a little while here, maybe tomorrow afternoon, will

already begin to feel restless, because not enough is being added to it here. And it will start thinking, how much longer have I got here? I have to stay another two days.

And then it'll project itself to the third day, when you're going to leave. Because that is then becomes the next significant event. Whereas this retreat to that self is a non-event.

So it will project itself away, because it always wants to be in the next moment, not in this one, that is a characteristic of object consciousness of the self. So it won't be happy with this for long. So that, it's good to know that that also is there in you.

And it does other things. It's not happy with what is for very long. And it likes to complain and react.

And I don't mean complain in saying, you're stepping on my foot, please remove your foot from my foot. That's a simple statement. You can do something to alleviate this, please do it.

That's not a complaint. I mean, the mind pattern of inner and sometimes outer complaining, which is to do with a deep-seated pattern in the mind-made self, that is the reactive. And although these are beautiful surroundings, some of them perhaps hard to find a more beautiful spot on the planet.

Yes. And yet the self will easily find things to be unhappy about, because we live in the world of forms. It's in the nature of the world of form that it is not totally satisfying.

Things go wrong in it. And the self loves that fact, because then it can complain. And here there are many people in a relatively small space, plenty of opportunity to complain about other people.

Maybe in the head only, or whatever conditions are not quite right. And in complaining, which is a deep-seated pattern, reacting, complaining of the deep-seated pattern of the mind-made self, the conditioned entity, in complaining and reacting, it momentarily strengthens its sense of self. Because when you complain, you are right, and somebody else is wrong.

And so it's unconscious, it is an unconscious attempt to strengthen one's sense of me, of self, which is never quite enough. So you need to strengthen it somehow, so you can't, here there may not be much else left for it, than to feel unhappy about something and focus on that. Could happen.

The pain body may come in and add to it. We're having a full moon on Saturday, which sometimes triggers pain bodies. So just to know that there are, there's a dimension in you of depth, which has brought you here, and there's the dimension, the shallowness of a mind-made me, that cooperated enough for you to be here.

Okay, I'll go along with that. In quite a few people, it didn't allow them to come here. At every retreat, there are people who at the last minute, or a day before, or maybe something, should I go?

There's no, what's the point? And after much agonizing, they cancel. So something in them prevented them.

This is quite normal. Maybe they'll come to the next one, or they get other teachings, or teachers, maybe taught situations. Everybody gets what they need.

So sometimes it interferes enough, but with you, at least it cooperated, to allow you, and some of you hardly made it here, because even a few days ago, you weren't quite sure whether you would actually go. So to observe, I may be talking a little bit more about it tomorrow, so that you recognize it clearly when it's there, because that's really all that's required, for it to recognize the conditioned entity that until recently was your entire identity. And it's really enough to recognize it.

And of course, there is something deeper in you that's arising and opening up, and that has brought you here. Throughout, we are using the portals that are available to us here, and one is silence. Not only in this room, but also out in nature, which is the other teacher here.

There are quite a few teachers this weekend. The beautiful nature that you're going to walk in, move in, is not only all the beautiful things that you see, thousands of life forms. That's beautiful.

There's also a vast sense of space, of spaciousness, and a silence that underlies it all. If you can listen to it first thing in the morning, you will hear the birds. Beautiful sounds.

They are objects in consciousness, perceptions. Beautiful. And then notice, just as you do it here, the silence or the stillness out of which the sounds come.

And suddenly the sounds have greater depth to them. That depth is your own depth, ultimately. It's the depth of the universe.

And you can then listen to that beautiful sound. Just the joy of life celebrating its own existence through these little forms. You can listen to that.

If simultaneously you are aware of space, you can listen to those sounds without any interference by thought. And that is the arising of the new consciousness in which a vast intelligence operates, far greater than thought. And you haven't lost thought.

When you need it, it's there. So we use the portals that are here naturally, and through silent space here, no matter what you listen to in nature, no matter what you see, there's also a vast spaciousness, a harmonious whole that holds it all together, all these

thousands of beautiful life forms. You can be aware of that also.

So the more you are aware of silence and space, the more that inner spaciousness, that inner stillness, they open up. And that is the depths of who you are beyond a little mind-made entity. That also has its own level of existence.

It will continue, yes. But you are no longer captivated by it and thinking that that's all there is to you, this uneasy, fearful, needy entity. And then we are using here, well, other portals, of course.

The main one, you could say, and I'm sure you are familiar with that already, is now. Every portal takes you into now. To be internally aligned with what is.

That's a wonderful portal. Whatever is, is as it is now. Allowing this moment to be.

And this is our practice this weekend. Internally to be aligned with this, to actually pay more attention to now than past and future. You're not going to lose them if during this weekend you don't pay that much attention to past and future, or they will want to reassert themselves.

Return attention to now. Welcome now. Whatever happens in now.

Some things, the little me might react. And then you notice. And you realize it's important, whatever is, you can't really argue with, because it already is.

Action then arises out of the indebted state, not out of the resistant state. That's intelligent action. If action should be needed.

So, whatever happens at this moment, and nothing can happen anywhere else except this moment. Nothing ever happened that wasn't this moment. Nothing will ever happen that's not now.

Whatever happens can only happen now and is, one could say, although the little me doesn't like that, whatever happens is connected with the totality of all life. The totality of the universe. Buddhists knew that 2,600 years ago already.

The interconnectedness of all things. Modern physicists know that. There are no separate events.

There only seem to be separate events. There's no such thing as a separate event or separate entity. Everything is connected, interconnected to the totality, the web of the entire cosmos.

Therefore, whatever happens is inevitable. Otherwise it would not be. It's connected to the fabric of the whole.

So, the is-ness of this moment could not be otherwise. And the mind says, oh yes, it could. If he hadn't done that, this wouldn't have happened.

But he did that. If I had acted differently, it wouldn't have happened. So it could be otherwise.

The mind argues in that way. But the fact of the matter is, it isn't otherwise. I can raise my arm.

Now it's raised. And the mind said, yeah, but you didn't have to do that. You could have not raised it.

But now it's here. Perhaps another universe has already branched off from this moment where I did not raise my arm. This is what physicists speculate about, that every moment different universes come out of infinite possibilities.

If we carry on talking about this, this will take us into philosophy. The fact remains, this moment is as it is. And then it changes.

And again, it is as it is. It may change through you, because you accepted the is-ness, which led to intelligent action. Because it's only now that the portal is open into true intelligence when you're not the reactive little entity that can't accept the is-ness and needs the future, which is no more than a thought form, isn't it?

Nobody has ever encountered the future except as a thought. Nobody has met it, ever. It only exists as a thought form.

The past too only exists as a thought form. They seem so real. Time, past and future seem so real.

And you can say, yeah, they must be real because I'm getting old. I'm burning up in time. And I'm shriveling just like a fruit, a fresh fruit.

And then it shrivels. And then it's gone. Everything is being burned up in time.

That's true on one level, it looks so real. And then if you look, yes, but time, past, future, never here. Nobody has ever met them except as a thought.

So it seems to do things to things, and yet if you look more closely, it doesn't even exist. No conclusions. Because then it becomes philosophy.

There's nothing wrong with philosophy, but not here. Just to see, even to see a paradox, to see the paradox of time and the timeless. So on this retreat we use the portals of silent space here and in nature.

We use nature itself, we may talk about that. Tomorrow, which doesn't exist except as a

thought form. We use the portal of now, which simply means our practice this weekend is to become friendly with now.

It doesn't sound important enough. I want ultimate realization. Well, just become friendly with now.

I want to attain the ultimate. Just become friendly with now. Yes, but what about the ultimate?

I want to add it to me. And finally I'll be complete when I attain the ultimate in the future. So the entire retreat then can be considered as a portal, potential portal into that unconditioned consciousness, space consciousness, just words, pointers.

It also helps, and here is another portal, to feel the inner body as you sit here, a certain aliveness in your energy field. Simply to sense that the body is alive, anchors you in now. And that I recommend when you go to bed here, because here you don't have television to stimulate your mind or other things, radio.

And if you're not staying here in the retreat place, and you happen to have a television in your room, I would recommend that you don't switch it on this weekend. Or the radio. Are you going to miss something terribly important?

Probably not. When you listen to the news on Monday, it will be the same. Twenty years ago it was the same.

Anywhere in the 20th century similar things happened and worse. So when you go to bed, lie there on your back, feel the energy field of the body. Just notice it.

It's not a big deal or complicated matter. Simply start somewhere in the body, hands, feet, oh, there's the hand. And then attention is there.

And then attention is in the general overall feeling of inner body. That anchors you quite simply in now. Thoughts will slow down, may even stop if your attention is fully in the body.

So instead of being immersed in some kind of thought stream, which is going to be about tomorrow, or your return trip home, or the problems that are waiting for you when you get home, and it will be saying you should have stayed home, you have too many things to deal with, you shouldn't have come. There's usual things that happen in mental noise. Then you step out of that into the aliveness of now.

And you use the inner body as a portal. And should you wake up in the middle of the night and the mind wants to start up again, me, my story, my problems, and then you notice, oh, let's go into the body. The mind will be saying, no, you can't, there's no point, not now, you can't feel your body now, there's too much to think about, too restless.

And then you feel the body. You don't necessarily have to believe what the head tells you. Not now.

It says, not now, think, think. Every thought says, I matter, give me attention. It doesn't say that openly, but it wants, because it's a little energetic entity, and it wants more energy for itself.

So it wants to be taken very seriously. It says, I matter, give me more attention. And then usually it gets it, it just pulls, okay, this matters.

And then it leads to more proliferation of thought streams coming out of that one. And it's probably problematic. And you're lying there in a nice bed.

There is no problem except as thought forms. If there were a true problem, it would be right in front of your eyes and you have to take action. A challenge, it would be a challenge that exists a lot in life.

But problem and accumulation of thought forms concerning future, sometimes past, has no actual existence except as a thought form. So it says, I matter, give me your attention. Off you go into a stream of thinking.

Can't sleep, just so much on my mind. And it burns up life energy. And then you wake up, and there's the heaviness of me, can't face another day of this.

So notice the tendency for mind to want to draw in all your attention. Sometimes coupled with certain emotions, let's say me, then the emotion energizes the thought. And that becomes a person's sense of self.

No space around it, just that, trapped in the form of me. And then you suddenly notice, emotional turbulence and mental noise. The noticing is the arising of something that is not conditioned, just to see it.

And with the seeing comes the possibility of stepping out. And then say, okay, I can actually feel my hand. Feel your hand, says thought, think about your problems.

So you sense, and you lie there, and you don't even want to go back to sleep, because it's so beautiful to be anchored in your inner energy field. And now, why go back to sleep? Enjoy your sleeplessness.

Oh, it's great. For a while I went a little mad. I loved that state so much, of not being able to sleep, that I would drink two or three cups of strong coffee before going to bed, just so that I could enjoy that incredible sense of aliveness in the body.

Not through the coffee, the aliveness was there anyway, but I wanted to stay awake as long as possible. No need for that. That reminds me, I would recommend that you don't, although we are in Italy, I'm sorry, that you don't indulge in alcohol this weekend.

You can indulge after, because when presence is fully there, it doesn't matter anymore. But the arising presence can easily become obscured through a couple of drinks, and then you go back into... So this is simply a recommendation.

We are also going to spend some of this weekend in silence. Again, a recommendation. There's no thought police or speech police.

So I may recommend certain periods during the weekend when we are simply in silence, at least external silence. So it's good to notice, and just a few days here are enough to encounter many different states in yourself. Loving it here, oh, this is great, and two hours later, hating it.

Just notice. Something in you, as I said, wants to be here. Something else doesn't really want to be here.

It went along and might regret it now. And just notice that. This room is open during the day, so you could come in any time also, just if you want to sit, just sit, be still, listen to silence.

Going out into nature, I recommend that even if you've come with a friend, every day to spend some time alone in nature also. Just walking, sitting, looking, listening. We'll talk more about that.

One recommendation then, we've been talking about thought, is not to take any thought that arises this weekend too seriously. Remember, the thought says, I am serious, I matter. But it's not that serious.

In this evolutionary leap that humanity is now taking, of which you, the form, is an important part. You are that evolutionary leap of human consciousness. In that leap, we go beyond thought.

We've gone through the whole huge evolutionary cycle of being totally identified with thought. And now it's time to go beyond, because if we linger any longer in this state of consciousness, which has become dysfunctional, because it is the end of a cycle, if we linger any longer, humanity will not survive as a species. It will destroy itself and the planet.

The madness will simply increase, as it's been doing throughout the 20th century. So we are stepping out of thought. Thought can still be used beautifully, creatively, but no longer have our self in it.

We are also going to spend certain periods of time, or rather no time, in stillness together. If there is a lot of interference through thought, simply use a portal, listen to silence. Feel the inner body, or whatever.

Or simply say, okay, there's mental noise, that's how it is, what can I do? There it is. All right.

And the arising of that new consciousness, one aspect of it, one way of looking at it, very limited way, everything, every perspective is limited. One aspect of that is, one can say, it is the arising of stillness from within. Alive.

Vibrantly alive, but still. And out of that, sometimes dynamic action can flow. It is not a passive state.

Our little opening ceremony, I almost forgot. Awakening. The bell signifies awakening.

Awakening out of thought. Thank you. I will see you in the now, at 10 o'clock, as you walk back to your room, and throughout this weekend, walk on the, what I call, the razor's edge of now.

One step at a time. It's miraculous. Take off your clothes.

Who cares about the story of me? You can go back to it. This is where something new can come in.

Only through that opening. Sense perception. Look at sense perceptions as a portal, as we sit here.

Usually the primary sense is sight. Unless you lose it, then it becomes hearing. But as we sit here in this space, probably the primary sense perception is hearing.

When you walk out into the beauty, it will shift to seeing, and hearing will become secondary. So let's start, since we are sitting here in this space. It's hearing, because there isn't that much to see, except this body sitting on a chair.

Not very interesting. So there are words being spoken, so that's hearing. There are little sounds around us.

A few little sounds produced by the people in this room. Moving. Occasional sounds.

And a few sounds coming in from the outside. And you'll be aware of that also. Birds.

Some human-made sounds from the outside. And I said just now, you'll be aware of that also. There's the sense perception.

How does that become possible? What you perceive is fleeting. It's a form.

A sound. Most sounds don't last very long. When you look at something, then you get the impression you may be looking at something lasting.

A tree. Or a person. That seems to last longer.

But sounds come and go. And I said yesterday, to listen to the silence in between and underneath the sound, that's one way of putting it. But what does that mean?

What is that? That is, at first it looks dualistic. I am listening to the silence.

But since you can't really listen to silence, there's nothing there, then you realise silence as an inner state. The state of listening is the silent state. The state of listening to silence is the stillness within.

It's not really two. So the listening to the silence is the doorway into the non-dualistic state of consciousness. Everything else is dualistic.

There's a subject and an object. And that's what yesterday I called object consciousness, which fills most people's lives. And so awareness arises.

It's strange that I can't really talk about this, but I'm talking. Awareness arises. And it is recognised as the primary ground in which all perceptions happen.

And that is the deeper meaning, the true meaning of stillness. It is knowing the awareness in which the sense perception happens. Not knowing it as I know it.

It's only through language that it becomes an object, because language functions like that. One could, to get a little closer to the truth, I know the ground of being, the awareness as myself. I as the sound perceptions.

Who is listening? Who is listening to the sounds? I, the stillness.

And so we could call this awareness of awareness. And the same happens when you go out and you look at something, visual perception happens. Now, in every human being, in most humans, the moment they hear something or they look at something, there is a mental commentary.

Thought objects arise. The me, the mind made object based, mental content based me, interprets and comments on what's going on. That's usually what happens.

According to its conditioning, it labels, interprets, there's mental noise, there's a sense perception and immediately it's made into concepts. You might be walking around beautiful nature and commenting mentally on very normal. And it's also normal to have some personal relationship to what you're seeing.

The me comes in. It compares that with something that I saw in that other place last year. It's not quite as nice as that forest that I saw then, but it's nice.

But I was in that forest last year, that was really something. It's normal. Or even more, this plant, I wonder if I can, this little sapling, maybe I could take that home.

I could put it in my garden. There's a relationship, a personal thing that comes in through which things are being seen. Comparative.

And if you're walking with someone, this inner noise very often becomes outer noise. And then there's a comment, oh look at that, what's that called, I can't remember the name of that tree. Look at that beautiful flower.

There's nothing wrong with saying things like that, but for most people, all their attention is immediately in commentaries. And when in the, Jesus teaching, there's one little, I just take this fragment from the New Testament, which simply says, look at the flowers. Look at the flowers.

Now there's a greater depth to it than people realize. When he said, look, he meant look. Now that is a different looking.

And that looking happens not through the conditioned mind, with its accumulation of content, but a looking that happens within an unconditioned field of spaciousness. That is through looking. Now the strange thing is, although most people wouldn't even know what I'm talking about, everybody has that already within themselves.

They don't know it. For example, it happens each time you look at something that just arises in your field of vision. A flower, a tree, a little beetle, a rock, a stone.

And there's a moment when you first, your vision focuses on this new sense object. And there's a little gap before the first mental commentary comes in. For most people, the gap is too small for them to even be conscious of it.

It's tiny. And then something is being said in the head, out loud. But there was a moment of true spaciousness within which first you explored visually the object in consciousness.

There was a moment of spaciousness in which the true looking happened. And it could be a second, two seconds. If something comes into your field of vision that is an unusual object that cannot immediately be interpreted, categorized, or compared to something else, then it may be that the gap of not labeling may be a little longer.

And that is called astonishment. And that would happen, and it's a beautiful state, the state of astonishment. That might happen if a UFO suddenly appeared and you can't quite...

or if it's half dark and some kind of animal is coming but you can't quite figure out what it is. And there's a moment of... So then the gap may be a little bit longer.

But then the mind will quickly try some interpretations. That could be... no, it looks like...

And then there's also, if something arises in your field of perception that is a huge challenge, perhaps even a threat to your survival as a physical entity, then it's possible,

suddenly, as the tiger jumps from the tree and then leaps towards you, that would be a moment of complete spaciousness. Thought cannot operate because it can't cope with that situation. There's nothing in your past that you can refer to that would enable you to deal with that situation.

You can look back, when was the last time a tiger attacked me? Or what have I read in handbooks about tigers? I can't remember.

And even if you had read handbooks of what to do in case of a tiger attack, as you read in... I live in Canada, sometimes in guidebooks you read what to do when you meet a bear. And they even have signs as you enter the forest, bear encounters, how to behave, what to do.

But when it happens, you won't remember. And so, and this is, it sometimes happens that an emergency situation accidentally produces that state of consciousness that is arising here, that is actually the next evolutionary level for mankind, humankind, and suddenly there is complete presence, alertness, stillness, and no commentary. And action may arise, if it's possible or necessary, suddenly you go into action, run away maybe, or do something that isn't right for that moment, maybe you just stand there and look.

And I've read accounts of people who were face to face with a tiger or some other animal and they just stood and looked in such presence in which there was not even fear. I don't fear the anticipation of seeing myself being eaten up by the animal. It's fear is always the next moment.

What's going to happen to me next? But in complete presence, there's no movement away from this. It's just this.

And then, that's the state of connectedness with the one intelligence, the one unconditioned intelligence of the universe, which then operates in that situation through you or by itself, through some other factor. So that's, accidentally it can arise, and here, on our retreat, we are inviting that state. Which otherwise happens accidentally.

Or you read, sometimes you might receive something, stunning news, somebody has just died. The same thing can happen. So simply to notice here, when you first look upon something in nature or even sitting in your room, there's a moment of clear perception before the mind comes in.

If you notice that moment, it tends to get longer, so there's more space in you in which the perception happens. That is a depth that suddenly is there. You become deep, that which you perceive suddenly has an aliveness and a depth to it, that otherwise it doesn't have.

Nature, for most people, because they immediately label everything, is quite flat.

Beautiful, but flat. It's like walking surrounded by walls or screens, because the label becomes the screen or the wall, the depth isn't there.

The unbelievable delusion of thinking that when you have formulated a sound about something, then you know what it is. Oak tree. Now I know what it is.

You've produced a few sounds, or if you don't speak them, it's a thought form in the head. That is an oak tree. It's an absurd assertion and delusion.

And now you go no further, because the label has become the screen between you and it. It's become flat and quite lifeless, because now you start thinking about oak trees and another oak tree or somewhere else. And the more you know about oak trees, the more labels you have, screens.

It doesn't mean to completely forget what it is. Sometimes to communicate, you may need the labels. Somebody may ask, what is that?

What are you looking at? Or a little child may ask, as they do when the mind starts to accumulate knowledge, so called, when the mind starts to grow and starts to accumulate concepts, there comes a stage in the child's life when they continuously ask, what's that? What's that?

And most parents feed them the concepts, the labels. That's an oak tree. Okay, let's go on to the next thing.

And immediately, from now on, they will, or let's just say tree, from now on, the moment they see a tree, they say, tree. So already at that early age, not that it could be, accumulation of concepts needs to happen, but a parent who is aware could create some more space and not just say, that's an oak, that's a tree. But to invite the child to look more, look, touch, see that, look at that, look there, can you feel that?

Up there, how the leaves move, can you listen to the sound of the leaves? And then the child begins to, oh, and then it might even have forgotten that it asked, what's that? And after you've invited the child to look, and you can only do it if you yourself have gone beyond being imprisoned by labels, then you can say, and that's called a tree.

We call it tree. Then the illusion isn't there that that sound is what it is, that thought form is what it is. It remains alive.

It has a depth, an aliveness, and in some way it remains a mystery, unfathomable mystery that has no end. And you're comfortable with that, because that is what depth is. The entire universe is deep, because you are so deep.

So, it's becoming free, as this is why we are here, of being imprisoned by mental labels, not only about nature, whatever it is. It goes hand in hand that we also become free of

labels about ourselves, labels I have accumulated about me, and walk around as an accumulation, a bundle of labels of me, certain conditioned mental contents, patterns, experiences, a name around it, and then that's, don't know yourself beyond that, and everything you look upon is looked through the screen of those labels, towards the self, the mind-made self, and then everything gets interpreted through that. And there's some personal relationship of the self towards everything, even nature. And that is why so many people, when they walk out into the beauty of nature, they have this slight feeling of uneasiness, and they can't wait after a while, saying, I need to get back to the city, or back to my usual surroundings.

There's a sense of not quite, of being an alien entity in here, a sense of not quite belonging here. And it's so quiet here. So we are paying attention here, and this is so significant, paying attention to sense perceptions, and allowing the sense perceptions to be there without the labels.

And if labels come, as you listen, or watch, recognize them as mental labels, so that you don't totally believe in it, totally drawn into it. So thought is recognized as thought when it comes. And it's not that important here.

Remember, the theme for our weekend here is, thoughts are not that important. And before, perhaps until recently, your entire life was absorbed by thought. It was all about that, and emotions that go with those thoughts, and give added fuel to those thoughts.

And the primary thought form was the me, the self. So the liberation of stepping out of that here, not even waiting for disaster, because of intense suffering, because eventually that will push you out, and life will do it. Eventually, it could take a while.

And then a human being reaches a point, the evolution of consciousness, when the readiness is there for this to happen without further suffering. So either that state is consciously chosen now, the state of awareness, aware presence, or life will push you into it. It won't drag you, pull you, kicking and screaming until the last moment.

No. Consciously chosen, you can choose that state now. This is not ultimately true, because you're not separate from the totality.

It's a perspective. Every statement is only a perspective. It is a helpful perspective to say, you can choose to step out of identification with thought.

You can choose, when you walk between here and the dining hall, you can choose when you walk between here and your room, to be there, present in every step. And you're walking in a field of stillness and alertness, instead of being a walking story, a walking conceptualized self. And that is a hundred times as heavy on the planet, if you could hear, if you had the psychic ears to hear how a conceptualized self walks on the planet, it would sound like a dinosaur steps.

You know, in the films about dinosaurs, how everything vibrates when they walk. And once they step somewhere, nothing grows for a long time. And of course, this is true for human beings.

When you visit, this is where humans have been, nothing grows anymore. So, you don't need to be destructive, quite destructive species in that mad state, quite destructive on the planet. Not as destructive as in Star Trek, there's a species called Bok.

Wherever they go, there's nothing left. But humans can get quite close to that. So, but every human, the heaviness of a personalized self on this planet, the heaviness in your own life that comes when you don't know yourself beyond a conceptualized sense of self, of me, which is accumulation of thought forms.

Past and future are of overriding importance in that sense of self. Because the past gives you your identity, the future promises your completion or fulfillment. That's why you need it desperately.

That's the illusion of self. And it's heavy. Collectively, humanity in that state is heavy on the planet.

And personally, in your personal life, ultimately there is no personal life. In your personal life, there is also a heaviness of your problems that are such an essential intrinsic part of one's sense of self. Me and my problems remove problems from the conceptualized sense of self and not very much remains.

And the strange thing is, just as future and past are thought forms only, have no reality, at least I haven't met anybody who has seen them or touched them or experienced them, past or future, they only touched and felt and experienced the now, ever. Just the same, the thought form of problem only exists as a thought form which is essential to the conceptualized sense of self. I'm carrying around these problems.

And some problems are long lived. I've carried them for years. And I'm still working.

Every night I wake up and I think about it. I haven't found the solution yet. But maybe I will if I wake up often enough in the middle of the night and think about my problems.

Perhaps a solution will come. And of course the thoughts are the same thoughts that I thought last year and five years ago. It's the same circular thoughts.

And to the body your problems are real. The body reacts as if you were in the midst of a very dangerous situation which is created in the head. And of course you're lying in your bed.

And so again to step out of that and a good question to ask is always to see whether the problem is actually real or not. What's the problem at this moment, here, now? What

problem do I have now?

Now. Not tomorrow. Now.

And then there's no problem left. A challenge may be left, but it doesn't turn into thought structures that go round and round and build up a sense of self around this challenge. If it's a true challenge, you face it and then action arises.

So we're stepping out of all that here. And psychically, one could say, we are losing weight quickly here. The heaviness goes up.

So as you walk between here and the dining hall, as you walk between here and your room, you can choose to walk along the razor's edge of now. One step at a time. And some of the places where you walk here are quite noisy, this gravel.

Now it's helpful because then there's the sound. It's not a means to an end. When you get to the dining hall, okay, or to your room, it's just not more important.

The future moment, the next moment isn't more important than this one. That's the delusion of the mind. Deep-seated delusion that the next moment is more important than this one.

So this is always a means to an end. All that is part of being trapped in thought and needing the thought-form future to fulfill the insufficient thought-form of me. And we can practice here living in the new way of not making the now into a means to an end.

This is enough. One step is enough. It's not going to get any better with the next step.

This is as good as it gets. And the more you are present with this step, the more there is a depth to it. It's more than the step.

There's a spaciousness to it. It's not just the step that you are taking right now. There's a depth to it.

It's not just the tree that you are looking at right now. That's beautiful, yes, but there is a depth to that tree. That is the inner depth, but ultimately inner and outer are one.

It is the depth of the universe. That's suddenly there. And so the step, of course, is also an object in consciousness.

The tree is an object in consciousness. Who knows what that is beyond the object that arises in consciousness? Who knows what that tree is?

Because all we know about the tree is certain impulses that are transmitted to the brain, to the mind, through the nerves, electrical impulses. And then it reaches the brain and then a mental image forms. Who knows what that is beyond that?

It's a mystery. Is there even anything there? Would there be a tree if nobody saw it, perceived it?

You know the famous question, if a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound if nobody is there? Does it make a sound or does it make no sound? Then you have to imagine nobody there.

And so you imagine, I am not there to listen to it. And of course you can, one could talk about that. This is sometimes called a Zen question, but it's not really a Zen question this one.

Because one could say with certainty that Zen questions have no real answer. They are there to stop the mind. This can stop the mind a little bit, but you can see, no, there is no sound.

Of course there is no sound if there is no ear. There is no sound. For a sound to be there it requires an ear.

And more than an ear, it requires an awareness. The ear produces the sense perception and that requires an awareness. So there is a depth suddenly to everything, and that is the depth of what I called last night, and these are just temporary pointers, nothing to cling to, what I called last night, space consciousness and object consciousness.

Object consciousness and the depths of that. But really, ultimately, that is awareness itself, consciousness itself, before it becomes something. And the moment you name it, as I have just done, it becomes limited again.

Because it's faster than anything that one could name or encapsulate in some kind of thought. It can only be known directly, not in a subject-object relationship. Ultimately, known can only be known as yourself.

The depths of yourself, not the self that consists of accumulated mental content, not the I am this, that and the other, the story, but the I am in its essence, that which remains beyond all forms. The only thing that you can know without any doubt whatsoever, because everything else may be a delusion, and in a way it is, because everything is so fleeting in the world of form. But this one thing that beyond any doubt is real, and that is the ground, the depths of I.

If it's all illusion, the illusion must be happening somewhere, it is known somewhere, it arises somewhere. Even in every illusion there must be something in it that's real, otherwise it wouldn't be. So even if our entire sense-perceived life, phenomenal life, the life of form is an illusion or a dream, and yes, it is very much like a dream, because it all passes and then it might could have been a dream.

When you get home after this weekend, your first day, you wake up at home again, and

first, did I dream that retreat in Italy, or was I there? For a moment there may be a doubt, because they are quite similar. It's gone.

Now the difference is, you can then get your photos and say, ah, it actually happened. But then if you lived for long enough, the photos would fade, and then you can't see anymore, where was that? It's fading, it's a fading photo.

It looks like a photo of a dream, blurred out, the blurred edges around things, it's gone. Nobody remembers anymore. Maybe your grandchild says, my grandfather once went to a retreat in Italy, and then that's the last thing anybody ever heard of it.

It's gone. Did it ever happen? Nobody remembers it.

Did it ever happen? And so the history is full of events that nobody remembers. A tiny fraction of human history got written down, you see it in stone, but most of it, nobody remembers.

It's gone, and it was perhaps very dramatic. And then it evaporated. And if not, did it ever happen?

Maybe, maybe not. It's strange, there is a dream-like quality to all of our lives, and yet, there's something in each dream that must be real, because otherwise the dream couldn't happen. There's nobody to dream it.

So there is an innermost essence to each dream, which is the substance. And those are the forms. And so there came this philosopher, Descartes, who wanted to find out, what is the one thing that I can know with absolute certainty?

And then he started thinking, and he spent several years thinking about what he could know with absolute certainty and beyond any doubt, because he had just come after hundreds of years of humanity being totally trapped in belief structures, and saying things, taking things for absolute reality that could be total fantasy. He said, maybe this is all total... Theologians were talking about angels, how many angels could dance on a needle or something like that, and he thought, maybe this is all fantasy.

What is it that we can know with absolute certainty? And he thought and thought and thought for years, and suddenly he realized, I'm always thinking. That must be it.

So he didn't quite go far enough. He got trapped in thought, and because he couldn't stop thinking, he finally came up with the famous statement, I think, therefore I am. And of course, that's the expression of an illusion, to equate being with thinking, to equate an identity of who you are with a movement of thought.

Not that he created the illusion, he just saw the illusion that was already there, that all humans were already trapped in. But the approach that he adopted was a good one, to

ask, is there anything that I can know beyond any doubt, because this world looks so ephemeral, so fleeting, and so you have to go deeper. There's a kind of inner listening.

What is it that remains? When the form dissolves, you wake up in the morning after the retreat, and before even thought operates, after you wake up, maybe you open your eyes, there's already the essence there. A spacious, aware presence, which has not yet identified with this thought, or that thought, or that memory.

It just is a field of spacious, alive presence that is there also now. In fact, it's exactly the same when you wake up at home in the morning, it's exactly the same as now, just I am. Beyond even the words I am, a sense of I am-ness.

And that, some people realize that, when life knocked down all the things that I am had identified with, I am had become mixed up with forms in the mind, a story. And so, you think that I am my story, I am my history. That sense of I am-ness gets mixed with thought forms, and you cannot distinguish it anymore from thought forms.

And so, that's the delusion that I am this or I am that. And sometimes it happens that life knocks these thought forms out of you, through great suffering, or great loss. You don't know who you are anymore, because all the things that you thought you were, you lost them.

Position, possessions, beliefs even, you don't know what you believe anymore. There are some people who doubt their beliefs when they lose something. There are people who go to church every Sunday, and suddenly, sometimes in old age, the partner, the husband or the wife dies, and they suddenly say, I don't, this doesn't seem to be working, that's not supposed to happen.

They doubt their belief, because it doesn't work anymore, the partner died. But you had a contract with God, and that's not supposed to happen. Nobody told me that these days.

Thought, belief forms get shattered too, through some disaster. And beliefs, mental positions, the self, the mind made self loves these things, this is my position. And then life knocks them down.

They become difficult when things around you get knocked down, suddenly you can't explain the universe anymore. My explanations suddenly don't fit the universe anymore. And I had it arranged so neatly.

And when people asked me, I knew exactly my viewpoint and my opinions, I could tell them exactly how things were, and suddenly, I don't know anymore. Sometimes when some collective disaster happens, like September 11th, and that's only one collective disaster that's happened everywhere on the planet, suddenly, couldn't explain things anymore. And even the people in churches found it difficult to find something to say

about it.

What can you say? Because people ask these strange questions, how can God allow this? If God was a separate entity controlling everything, not knowing God is the essence.

So, these things, either through disaster or through a more gentle opening, which is the case here, these thought structures give way to something deeper, a deeper dimension within yourself that emerges. So we are inviting this in here. We are, please, come.

And the easiest way, of course, when you open the portals, this is the evolutionary impulse of the universe. It will happen, even if you say, no, no, it will happen. Or you can open the door, the inner door.

And a very easy opening of the inner door is just, as you know, this is why I call it the portal, the yes to now. Oh, that's the opening. So that's really all that's needed is that opening.

The mind-made self can't do that. If you were only here as that mind-made egoic entity that is based on thought, you wouldn't even know what these words mean. You wouldn't recognize the truth of what yes to now is.

You would be frightened of that and run away. But you already know the truth of it, because the opening is already happening in you. And now, here's the midwife, that's all, so that the birth process happens more quickly, before humanity destroys itself completely.

If that happened, it would be okay, too. On a cosmic level, it doesn't matter. Consciousness flowers anywhere, through any form.

Many life forms didn't make it on the planet. But it would be beautiful if consciousness flowered through the human form. So that's why we are here, so we are inviting that.

So it's the death of the old, the death of the me, but it's a gentle, beautiful death. Maybe it's gentle now, maybe life has already knocked you on the head a few times, and that's why you're here. And now this is simply completing your death as the mind-made entity.

And so you choose presence here. And you choose the portals that are here, the sense perception, presence in every step. And then the deep-seated mental habits of labeling subside.

The possibility arises of allowing a sense perception, not just for a moment, which everybody has, the first moment they look upon something, there's the gap, there's the true looking. But here the possibility arises to be with something, especially nature, without needing to call it anything. Clear perception, spacious perception.

So one could say you sense that who you are is a deep space, and the entire world

happens in that deep space. Spaciousness, stillness, and that is also a peace that is deep. Choose also when you are out in nature, choose for a little while to sit somewhere, or stand somewhere, and look upon something, whether it be a plant or a stone, or a little patch of ground, let's say one square meter.

And even on one square meter, so many life forms, so many shapes and forms. So it's so alive, even that little square patch of ground. And you simply stay with that, there's moss growing there, a little beetle running there, tiny, every little stone is different.

And you're not labeling it in any way, you're just allowing the sense perception to be there, and you stay with it for a while as a spacious presence in which that sense perception arises. And then you see even this seemingly totally insignificant patch of ground is almost, one could say, an entire universe, is so alive, has such depth to it, which is not different from your own depth, because you and it, in that non-labeling perception, you and it are no longer two, because it arises within the spaciousness of yourself. So that is unitive knowing, not separative knowing through little labels.

So, and that's, I recommend this, this weekend, to occasionally go somewhere, just choose a little field, a little area, whatever it may be, and just give it attention, let it be there, and watch. Without getting totally lost in the watching, you watch and you know yourself as the spaciousness. So this is perceiving through stillness, unconditioned perception.

Occasionally it's happened that great artists looked upon a seemingly insignificant object in that way, because there are some great artists who painted landscapes that were nothing special, nobody would have looked at them twice, just an ordinary field and an ordinary tree, nothing, and they, but they must have stood there and looked, and there was suddenly a depth, and then they went to a canvas, and some of that depth's perception, some of that spacious perception that they had, also got somehow onto the canvas, the fragrance of that state of space perception, somehow got onto, and so we call it a great work of art. If you see only the forms when you look at that work of art, it's not, nothing special there, and then you see some other works of art that are totally spectacular, there's a huge stack with horns there, and a huge mountain, dramatic looking, and somehow, and a huge river flowing, but somehow it doesn't have that depth to it.

There may even, as van Gogh looked at a straw chair, a wooden old rickety chair in his room, and he must have looked, looked, and so a depth and spaciousness arose, it's not just the chair, then he painted that chair, which probably he paid the equivalent of one euro for, because it was so old, one euro for the chair, ten million dollars for the painting of a chair. And that's, because there's some of that, then most of the artists, the moment they can only do that for brief moments, in the rest of their lives, the space perception isn't there. They are just as mad as everybody else, sometimes even more mad.

And so we learn this perception, which goes far beyond perception, and you don't need to become an artist, maybe you will, but it's not necessary. And so we begin, it is, nature is helpful in that, and later, when we may address that, this afternoon or tomorrow, in the now, of course, that same perception can flow into doing, when you begin to do things, because that's where people lose themselves, even people who can already be present in nature, they still lose themselves when the world impinges upon them and says, this matters, and they lose themselves in the doing, and the spaciousness is lost, and they're trying to do good, but the essence of good isn't there anymore. They think this is what matters, the doing is what matters, but it's always secondary.

And then, bring that into human interaction, the spaciousness, that's the great art. And that's only then the world changes. For the time being, right, let's stay with nature, and then we'll bring it into human interactions.

Nature exists in a state of thoughtlessness, no mind. So it can teach you the state of no mind. The fact that nature is pre-mind, and humans are going beyond mind, doesn't matter.

You both meet in the state of oneness, the connectedness. Humans lost it for a long time. They got lost in time.

They got lost in thought. That was the human condition for a long time. And maybe even that was an illusion, maybe it wasn't, it was just a long dream.

Maybe it was a short dream that seemed very long. So, I recommend that until this afternoon, we spend this day in silence. And so, give attention to the little things that you do today.

We mentioned walking. There's the walking. And there's the field of awareness in which the walking happens.

There's the picking up of a glass of water. It's moving towards the mouth in its journey. And then there's the drinking.

And then it moves back. In the normal state of consciousness, the picking up of the glass of water and moving it to the mouth is a means to an end. Because the end is wanting the water in here.

So it's... What's next? What's next?

Because what's next is always a question of the mind-made self. What can I add to me next? I've just added some water.

Because even that, of course the body needs a certain amount of food and water. But there's a strong psychological element to that created by the mind-made self and its

need to add more. And that becomes the problem of eating more than you need.

Which is a very common thing for many people. And it's just one aspect of needing more. But it doesn't really matter on what level you add more to complete me.

Could be chocolate comes next. And then that movement is also a means to an end. And always...

After it's happened, what is the next thing? And the next thing may be a book. A spiritual book even.

If it's truly spiritual, it may not be that satisfying because it doesn't give you much. But if it gives you information or interesting theories, then it works. And then after a while it doesn't work anymore, you need more of something else.

But you've just absorbed some new belief perhaps through that or some new opinion. And so here, in a relatively simple environment, there isn't that much that you can add. Well...

So let's see if we can be with the little movements that occur here. And see if certain things we can perform in a state of simple presence. Even picking up a glass of water.

And during that space, while the water travels, and this to the mind seems insignificant, it says, is that going to solve my problems, drinking a glass of water? And the amazing thing is, yes, it will solve your problems, because all your problems were structurally created by the structure of your mind. We're going beyond that.

The problems are structural in every case. So yes, it will, but... The space in which the water moves could be a space of simple presence in which this movement is not a means to an end, it's just fine as it is, and there's no thinking while this happens.

And that is truly an evolutionary leap. While the water is being picked up, there's simply a sense of spacious presence in which this movement happens. And while you drink the water also, it tastes much more alive than when I needed to get it down as quickly as possible.

And then it travels back. And that was that physical movement of coming and going, there was no thought, just spacious presence. That is an evolutionary change.

If movement happens within the space of simple awareness, not a means to an end, just that. And simple things, because here you only do simple things, maybe at home you do important things, I don't know. But in this retreat, there's nothing important, not what the mind calls my business or whatever is important.

You haven't got your business here, well you could carry it in your head and think about my importance, but it's not really, whatever you do here, the movements are not

important in themselves, and that's why it's such an opportunity. And then you might walk a few steps that go up five steps, and again, during that movement, there's no thought, there's just a step, spacious presence, nothing much from the point of view of mind. And so that movement in space, that external movement, happens within a deeper spaciousness of simple thoughtless awareness.

The arising of thoughtless awareness, not just while you sit in meditation, but in life. And it could arise if we are spending this, after this, from between now and our next meeting in silence, you'll be eating, nothing to talk about. Of course you could talk to yourself in the head while you eat, or you could be there with a simple movement of, and you look simple.

So it happens within the spaciousness. And then you may carry, you carry the plates back to the kitchen. And don't just, it's enough even sometimes to put one plate, pick up the plate, put it from here to there.

Without the interference of thought. It's not a great thing, and yet it is incredible. A totally different energy field that comes into that.

There's also a care that flows into that kind of doing. Even just picking up the water, even just walking up the five steps, or cleaning something in your room, or removing your shoes. There's suddenly what one could call almost quality of doing, when it is done, not as a means to an end.

Not with a view to some future moment, but it is done in presence. No thought, because thought will reduce it to a means to an end. Or it will bring in something old.

Some people think they are present when they are saying mentally, I am now walking up five steps. One, two, three, four, five. Of course you are creating mental accumulations.

There's a past already, you remember the one, two, three. No, this is unnecessary. You are just walking, you don't need to tell yourself that you are walking up the steps.

This is thought. Simply paying attention to the movement. Enough.

So that's all the little things, and often you will miss it. You will walk up the steps, and then you say, how did I get up here? You might miss it, you may eat something, and then you look at the empty plate of your dessert, and say, did I eat that?

So it happened in that you were somewhere else already. Okay, you won't be there every time. The old conditioning of course still operates also.

The two shifting in and out of that state of freedom. That's why we are here. If you go for walks, you can feel the sound that your steps make.

A generalized field of attention. Alertness, openness. And then remember, occasionally

stop, stay with one little area or tree or plant.

Give it attention. The arising of the unconditioned consciousness. Space.

Inner space. Outer space. And during this retreat, you can observe thought streams, emotional streams, coming and going.

And it becomes so obvious, the impersonal nature of thinking and of emotions. Energy streams. Sometimes when I listen to a distant conversation, to humans speaking, really, it's thought speaking.

Energy form of thought, thought streams. Sometimes enormous momentum behind it in a simple conversation. An enormous momentum behind that.

Often energized by emotion. And as the presence arises, you can watch and sense those energy streams. First, perhaps you see them in someone else and you realize thought is speaking.

It reminds me of what one existentialist philosopher said. We don't speak. Language speaks us.

We can extend it because language really is thought. We don't think. Thought thinks us.

Emotions also, as you are here. It's long enough, these few days, for different emotional streams to come up. Including sadness, perhaps.

Including anger or discontent. Whatever it is. And to see that also is ultimately impersonal.

Your anger is very much like anybody else's anger. The story, which are the thought forms that are attached to anger, may differ from person to person. One person might say, I am angry because...

And the other says, well, I'm angry because... And then comes the story. Angry.

Anger. If you could feel somebody else's anger, it feels basically the same as your anger. No matter what the mental story that attaches itself to it is.

Or sadness. Fear. In itself, fine.

Not problematic at all. Thought streams, emotional streams. Only when a self is lodged in there, when the I am, who you are in your essence, which is consciousness itself, awareness itself, becomes mixed up with that, then there's a me in every emotion and in every thought.

That's the entity, the egoic entity. A little analogy. You could think of a cinema projection.

A film is being projected. The figures on the screen are acting out the drama of the film, according to what's in the script. And in this analogy, let's say these figures have an actual existence, and they know themselves only as the forms that appear in this film on the screen.

And in the middle, somebody could begin to suddenly realize their essence as light. Because every film is only modifications of light. The projector is a powerful source of light.

The light is obscured by the film in various ways. So if an actor in a film could wake up and realize his or her true nature, he would realize, I am light, not who I thought I was. And everything else in this film is also that.

Another analogy, you could have an actor on stage who's been acting out his or her role for so long that he or she has become that role. And every day, forced to act out the same role, the same words come out, the same reactions come, and he or she no longer knows themselves as who they are beyond the script or the role or the conditioning. And that's very much like a normal human being.

Every day, the things that come out of their mouth or that go around in their heads are the conditioned thinking. The entity, the mind-created entity engaged in thought. Thought has created the entity.

Identification with thought as me. And the emotions and the reactions, predictable. You know how predictable people are.

People you've known for a long time. Unless something comes in that is not the conditioned, then suddenly something new has come in. But if you meet your relatives at Christmas, then you'll see, you can predict what they're going to say, how they're going to react.

The same conversation will happen this year as last year and before and before and before. So to wake up out of that. And it doesn't mean you immediately become free because the conditioning has a momentum behind it.

The thought streams have a momentum. And although here you may be able to step out in nature, you may be able to step out and know what it means to be free of the compulsion to think. And suddenly enter that state of clear awareness.

Just presence, stillness. Wow. But then it doesn't mean the momentum is now gone.

Thought has subsided for a while. Now, the moment you begin to interact with another human being, it has a chance to come back in. Conversation starts and before you know it, you express your opinions and there's a self in it.

And then you are dragged along by thought. And when you listen often to two people talking and if there's no presence, no spaciousness around the thoughts that are being expressed. There are thoughts here too, otherwise the words wouldn't come out of the mouth.

But there is a spaciousness around the thoughts. There's also a depth or sense of space out of which the thoughts come. Now, you recognize that as you sit here.

You recognize that the thoughts are not all that matters here, not even the main thing here, but the space out of which they come. That means it's also in you, the depths, the space of no thought, or as I call it sometimes space consciousness, is also in you and it deepens as you sit here. All you need to do is sit here and it deepens.

And it recognizes itself. In recognizing itself, it deepens. And yet within it, thought operates.

It doesn't mean you can't think anymore. Thinking can still happen without that compulsive, addictive quality to it. When there is a me in every thought, mental positions identified with the position of me.

And then with that comes sometimes, almost if you are very sensitive, you can sense almost a kind of violence, even when people are discussing something. There's already that underneath. Don't you question my position.

So when you go back, the challenge is human interaction. And the tendency is to get drawn back completely into identification with thought and emotional patterns. And you can see when people talk, how the stream of speech or thought goes on and on.

Sometimes they sit, there's no gap between their thoughts. Between the speech. They are being dragged along.

You can't get, sometimes, you can't get a word in. There's no gap even for you to say something. A person is very much identified with that.

So when you interact here, you will be speaking, we may talk again after this, but it's good to have a balance here between not speaking and speaking because we can learn a lot through interacting. Because the challenge will come back anyway when you leave here. You could spend the entire weekend in silence.

And then you have to move back into the world and interact. So great alertness is required when you interact with other humans, human beings. And when you begin to speak, before we address that, it's you're listening.

Somebody is speaking, you are listening. The first important thing to remember is not to listen in the usual way, but listen in the state that we are in here, when we sit here.

Attention.

Bare attention. A complete openness so that the words simply are being received without a commenting response inside you. No preparing the next statement.

No immediately taking another position, reacting to the other person's position, mental position. And you immediately, internally, have another thought come up that conflicts with that person's position. And you're just waiting for him or her to stop.

And then you, with great energy, you put forward your position. And you can, you may watch the tendency for that to want to come up and allow it, just watch it, and then go back into the state of attentive listening. The greatest thing, if you, only that, to be able to listen to another human being in the state of openness would transform every relationship.

In that listening, this is the secret, and perhaps while you listen to these words, that is relatively easy, yes, you're paying attention to the words, but while you listen, you're aware of the space of awareness through which the listening happens. The field, which I sometimes call the now, in which everything happens, because that's what it is. It never leaves you.

So you could say you're aware of that now and that which happens in the now, which is that voice, those words. It helps, people find it helpful sometimes to be anchored in the inner body while they listen. So you listen almost with every cell of the body, one could say.

You're here, attention is in here. There's a great spaciousness. If you go deep enough into the body, first you may encounter certain energy movements, and then you go deeper, there's simply spaciousness in there.

So that also is a doorway into spaciousness. Basically, the body is empty. Ask a physicist, and they will tell you 99% of the body is empty space.

More than 99%. And what the rest is, they don't quite know. So what looks so solid, isn't solid at all.

The distances between the atom's molecules is so vast, and even within the atom, there's mostly empty space. It's all completely empty. So you go into the emptiness and listen from there.

And that is, you can now listen without the compulsive reactivity coming in. And occasionally you may notice the reactivity wanting to adopt a position, wanting to, and you notice it as a movement within the spaciousness. And it comes and it subsides.

And so that is the spacious listening. And if anybody works with people, in the capacity

of whatever it may be, body worker, counselor, therapist, the key lies always in that state of attentive, open field of awareness that comes through you, but is far beyond the person. The person is the identification with the mental, emotional stream.

Then you become an opening for that current of awareness, spaciousness, space consciousness to come through. And even therapists who have received training in very mind-dominated therapies, after a few years of practice, they get tired of categorizing and analyzing and applying their particular intellectual framework. And after 10 years of practice, they one day, they begin to just sit there and listen.

And suddenly, their practice becomes 100 times more effective. There is the field of presence suddenly. They can still occasionally use things that they've learned, but more and more, they will be speaking.

When speaking happens, because it happens out of that stillness, it's spontaneous. It's right. It's what is needed for that moment comes out of that unprepared and sometimes it comes through the other person because the field is there.

That state of consciousness, also, of course, other people know it. Some great sportsmen know that they sometimes call it the zone, entering the zone, which is the transformed consciousness through which it happens. The Tao is playing tennis, which is another word for that unconditioned intelligence.

And I'm sure that's why people like to watch two people hitting a ball for hours on end, which in itself can't be that interesting. But somehow, they get there's something else at work. It's more than two people hitting a ball.

It's the play of total at-oneness with the totality. So what the Chinese call the Tao is actually playing tennis. There's no thought.

If the tennis player were thinking, it wouldn't be very good. They would lose the game. The interference of thought means gone.

You would lose within five minutes. How could thought think, I wonder where the next ball is coming from? Or imagine the most powerful computer created by thought trying to work out where the next ball is coming from.

You could put all the computers together and they would self-destruct because it's too complicated. Can't couldn't do it. What the computer would have to totally different way of knowing it breaks everything down.

The mind, it has its place for certain things. But the mind breaks everything down into little bits and pieces and further bits and pieces. And the more you develop your mind at universities, the more advanced you become at a university, the more tiny your little piece becomes.

And the pieces have become so tiny that when you start trying to work out what you're going to do a PhD on, you have to ask the professor is there a tiny piece left for me? And the professor says yes, here is a tiny piece but you can cut it up two more times. And then you do it and then there's maybe three or four other people in the world who understand what you've written because you're now a specialist.

And so if for most humans that's all they know. That is called intelligence. And it's a tiny aspect of what real intelligence is.

It's not separate. Yes, it's a small expression of intelligence, but imagine losing yourself in the cutting up and in the analysis and leading your own life through the thought process of thought. How inadequate.

So imagine the computer working out even the simplest things. The bird flying from one branch to another which is totally intuitive. There's no decision making involved.

It just looks. From a human point of view it might look as if the bird were waiting or trying to figure out when is the right moment to jump off this branch. But it's not like that.

The bird is simply the jumping off hasn't happened yet. It's not figuring out anything and then jumps off and in that harmonious flight lands on the other branch. Now imagine a computer or you might need to figure out the trajectory beforehand.

What is the speed? What is the wind resistance? What is the ratio between this and that?

Gravity has to be taken into account too. What is the weight of the feathers? It becomes a complex mathematical problem.

Just getting from one branch to another. It would. And so how does the bird work that all out?

It's without mathematics. Because it's not, it's using thought. It's not using the analytical intelligence of thought.

Another intelligence is at work that does not need to break life or information into little bits and pieces and make a lot of noise about it. It simply happens. And it's this flower.

Again, humans could get together and say let's create an incredibly beautiful flower. And how are we going to do it? So committee meetings start.

Discussions. It needs to shape. Okay, let's consult the computer about how it's...

Yes, they could never create. And it's come out of stillness. Not a single thought has gone into the creation of the flower.

Just... So that in nature that still, that operates, that unproblematic, a different intelligence, not recognized by the human mind even as intelligence. Everyone has that potential within.

But unfortunately, everybody is conditioned by our culture into only accepting the analytical as intelligent. So one could talk of, if you talk of in physical terms, right brain, left brain, there's perhaps a correspondence. But it goes deeper.

So to see that an intelligence that is far greater than anything you could work out through the mind, which has its place for certain things, is there. And why not bring that into your normal everyday life? It operates through stillness, not through noise.

It doesn't need to break things down. So when you listen to another person and you are there in a helping capacity, thought movement in the state of attentive listening, and thought is not trying to figure out how can I help this person? I need to think of something.

Or make some reference to something I have learned. Case history number 223 was similar to this one. And then you go to the book and look at case history 223.

Yes, there's certain similarities and there's another case history there. What you can do like that is very limited. And now comes the possibility of just just allowing the aware spaciousness to be there.

And then through that through healing, through transformation, real insights suddenly they happen. Change happens. And you're not trying to change anything or anybody.

There is no trying in that. And what is implied here that of course is the total yes to the suchness of now. Even when you sit with another person because when you sit with another person the suchness of now comes in the form of that person.

And there's no judgment of any kind as simple yes this is the suchness of this moment. No thinking this person should be different, should this, should that. This moment is as it is.

There was a therapist some years ago in the United States who realized the power that lies in what he called unconditional acceptance of the person that before they called the person the patient but he didn't use the word patient anymore which implies many things but acceptance and that transformation happens not through categorizing analyzing labeling calling him or her pathological or finding some kind of label for the disease another label but simply unconditional acceptance.

Now they try to teach that sometimes to their people. It's sometimes the basis is not taught which is the basis for unconditional acceptance is the ability to step out of

thought and rest in the state of no thought. If you're trying to practice unconditional acceptance through thought then you get into trouble again.

This is like Christians who try to love their neighbor as themselves without having gone beyond the judgments of thought. Every thought is a judgment. So they try to do it and since the teaching of consciousness exists has only come down to us in fragments they couldn't quite see that what he's talking about is the transformed state of consciousness in which you take no thought for the moral future.

And then it happens naturally that you love your neighbor as yourself because in that knowing that comes out of that state that is a unitive knowing very similar to what we talked about this morning when you look at a tree you look at nature you know that tree no longer through the labels of the mind but on a deeper level and you can know the other person in the same way without knowing anything necessarily about their story. It can be a deep knowing that goes beyond the story in the other person although mostly if you're a therapist what you will hear is the story and that's fine.

You listen to that but you listen beyond there is a field of presence and that awakens presence in the other person which is also even in the most mad person and mad means totally identified with thought not the slightest gap that's already madness and so you listen and suddenly there is an intelligence at work which operates out of the totality of that situation not necessarily through you and that applies to any situation in life to which you bring or which you meet in that state of consciousness in which you totally face the is-ness of now and there is language is never quite right but I'll say it anyway there is a current of awareness that flows and that's that then deals with the situation whether you're sitting with a person or whether it is a very difficult situation in your life not the mind created problem making which in many cases has no reality whatsoever but let us say it's a true challenge and so you bring to that you face that completely in the state of attention and in that facing it doesn't matter for how long thought comes to an end for maybe not for long there's a space a spaciousness of no thought and that is the power that lies dormant in most in all human beings the power is in all human beings but it is still dormant in most human beings one could say so this the simple ability to give attention to a situation one could say look in a wider sense we talked about you can see how it's all connected how important it is to be able to look at a tree in that state and that is relatively easy because a tree is not very challenging a tree even helps you along the tree says let me teach you stillness that's where I live my home is called stillness and the tree would love to teach you stillness so the tree is helpful you can go to the tree now that's beautiful and then comes challenges humans so with people you become still good then you start the other way around that's okay that is more rare it happens usually that people they even then say I want to leave the world I want to live alone I can't face all that much madness anymore but the beautiful thing is it's through the challenges that presence deepens through the challenges of being with people and the situations that they create so to be able to look first at nature then to be able to look

at a person at a situation just looking in a wider sense now giving attention and there is one common denominator here and that is there is a space in which the movement of thought has come to an end it can thought can then operate again out of that space which is much more empowered thought not the repetitive self-serving thinking that most people are trapped in just as these words come out of the state of no thought so the words have a certain aliveness which even I sense and I speak continuously about the same things almost every day now one would have thought finally you must get tired of saying the same it's never literally the same but it always points to the same and sometimes it's almost literally the same you must get tired of saying the same things and the strange thing is it's each time it seems new and alive because it comes out of presence and so you could when you identified with the structures of thought only everything becomes jaded and old in your life and the older you get the more stale the world becomes to you through your perception so everything you know the expression being there done that and so you go through the world and nothing can it's like almost the world gradually turning black and white and more and more lifeless there's actually nothing happening to the world it's because you're looking at the world through the old mind structures and the accumulated content in your head that is the filter through which you look at people even at nature and then it gets there's a line is it in Hamlet how weary stale and unprofitable are the uses of this world or something like that that's weary stale and unprofitable it's the heaviness of one's own mind structures and as presence arises you see that everything is new it has no real past nature and is fresh and new and every time you see it it's fresh and new you don't look at it through the filter of conditioned thought there's a beautiful book I would recommend it's by Krishnamurti it's one of maybe the only book or one of very two or three books that he actually wrote by hand and it's called Krishnamurti's Notebook in which he records not only his states of consciousness every day but every day every little chapter he wrote a little chapter every day for about a year and a half and he always every chapter contains a description of nature as he saw it on that day the trees the leaves the sky and each time it's fresh as if he had never seen it before the description still contains the freshness of that it's new every time because it is not looked upon through the filter of conditioned thought and that this state is arising now in many human beings this is the liberation liberation from time the liberation from thought the liberation from self it's mind made it's little self heavy but little so when you interact here you can bring just as you listen here in that attentive listening listen to the other person even if they're talking nonsense ultimately it's all nonsense even if they're talking nonsense you listen and so there are the words and there is the the field of awareness through which the listening happens and as you listen you're aware of the field through which the listening happens as yourself so one could say you're there as the I am presence the deepest that is usually confused with thought I am I am this and that and that and you are that but the deepest that's what's left when you step out of identification with form that's what's left what Descartes the philosopher couldn't get to because he never could step beyond thought so he thought I think therefore I am is the ultimate truth one could almost go so

far as to say if he had said I don't think therefore I am would have been truer I don't think therefore I know who I am you can have all kinds of variations but they would get closer to the truth and from that simple presence you listen and then at some point you may find words may come simple you may say something you may not you may just listen a different quality a different energy field is there now from what usually would be there which is mind interaction there is a depth and then you can bring it into situations where humans meet which are usually full of conflict because whenever two humans meet potentially it's a holy encounter as the course of miracles puts it potentially there is the presence of God I am the I am is there but usually wherever two humans meet that's the beginning that's a two is a crowd and before long and then if three or four get together you don't need to wait long before you have egoic conflict before you have mental positions that they identify with as me and then you have two who agree on one mental position and the other two agree on a different mental position so any human situation that you go into you will find the conflict go to big companies awful unless there are a few companies where there's a little bit of the enlightened consciousness coming in but most companies are dominated totally by the mind structures of the self which says it's totally dominated by right and wrong and power and more more it just it doesn't know what for it just wants more to grow see Enron corporation nothing it's not that these people were evil they just the ego itself was there magnified through that organization and the ego wants more because it doesn't feel fulfilled yet and that gets translated into a corporation which feels I'm not big enough yet we need more profit more what for we don't know but more more more until finally it self-destructs or you can see it in nations they want to conquer other nations Germany was possessed by in the last century by that egoic mind pattern which said we need more land what for don't know just more and we need more enemies what for because then we feel more strongly who we are it gives it strengthens our sense of self so and finally if we end up having enemies north south east and west then we will really know who we are because we define our form identity through the other forms that are alien to us and so we get strengthened in our collective form identity and for a while that feels good both on a personal level and a collective level during that time in Germany almost nobody committed suicide so it was a strengthening of the illusory self but of course you get drawn into great madness and suffering is inflicted on other human beings and ultimately also on yourself and finally the whole thing self destructs

[Speaker 4] (3:07:30 - 3:07:32)

oh the

[Speaker 1] (3:07:32 - 3:07:56)

illusion you cannot sustain illusion for that long it self destructs oh okay there comes a microphone okay

[Speaker 2] (3:07:58 - 3:08:31)

when I am interacting with people and I'm trying to practice being present but for some reason there's a pattern of behavior whatever in that person that really annoys me I really don't know I try to keep it to myself into it's my problem it's not the person's problem but it's really annoying so I don't know is there a moment that I can express my annoyance without falling into egotistical patterns

[Speaker 1] (3:08:31 - 3:08:35)

okay so this is that at work or private

[Speaker 2] (3:08:36 - 3:08:38)

any situation could be

[Speaker 1] (3:08:38 - 3:08:40)

any situation yes

[Speaker 2] (3:08:41 - 3:08:43)

with a taxi driver or yes

[Speaker 1] (3:08:43 - 4:03:18)

even here taxi driver or anybody restaurant waiter whatever yes colleague at work yes so that's a reactive pattern which has an energy to it that you can actually feel inside you and really all that's needed is to feel the energy that's behind that which is an emotional energy coupled with usually a thought which comes first sometimes the emotional reaction comes first or the thought may come first that you should be doing something different that thought is there whether it's expressed or not you should not behave the way you behave you should know better you should or you should not that the should is there and so be aware of the thought and be aware of the feeling the emotion that comes be aware of how it feels the awareness may only come at first after you've shouted something and you may still feel the lingering of the emotion or thought movement after the event with a little bit less power and then suddenly you're aware of it and it seems that you had no choice it just happened and so as presence arises you will notice in the middle of a reaction the awareness is suddenly there and while you are shouting you idiot you should know better do you even have a driving license or whatever and in the middle of it you notice it as a conditioned pattern and before you know it you will feel it before it happens the reaction as an energy movement or as a thought movement in you you may be driving many people feel annoyed when they drive because they take it all personally they take other drivers other cars personally if there came a strong wind and pushed them aside they wouldn't get angry they might

have some fear but because they realize that the wind is non personal but with humans you think they should know better or they shouldn't do this they shouldn't behave like that but they do so you watch the reactions and if there is enough presence in you you will find the reaction will come and move through you as a wave movement and you are no longer compelled to act it out and you also as presence arises you see the ultimate futility of the reaction at most it is self serving it serves to strengthen your thought based sense of self whenever you get annoyed at somebody that pattern is there because what is implied here is that you are right surely and the other person that you are annoyed about or the situation probably created by other people that you are annoyed about is wrong surely that's why you are totally justified in being annoyed because you are right and you are always right that is the when you are totally identified with thought you are always right in your own belief when a gap comes then you can sometimes see afterwards that maybe you were not right maybe that was just a position that you identified with and you can see the other person's position as also or equally right but that only comes as awareness comes in and we all know people I am sure you are not one of them we all know people who are always absolutely right that they are right and nobody else can be right I am sure everybody knows people like that who are so identified with their mental position that nobody is ever right unless until they say it and so those are people who are very much identified with a conditioned self the self loves being right it loves somebody else to be wrong because for a little moment it feels stronger so when you get annoyed that feels good on some strange level because you feel you are more strongly yourself now this is usually unconscious but if you make it conscious you can actually see it that it is actually in the service of strengthening my sense of self because the sense of self that is derived from mind is never quite strong enough it always seeks more to strengthen itself and very often the more means more right than somebody else then this can be added and some people have that as their main way of strengthening their self they may not have good looks or great wealth or fame VIPs or great knowledge because these are all ways in which people try to add something to themselves and some people may have none of that but they can feel the whole world they are all idiots they are all totally wrong look at them what they do everybody is doing it look look at and there are people who complain all day long about other people in the world what they are doing occasionally they may even get a little bit of truth because there is a lot of madness but they derive their sense of self from that in the absence of other things but there are others who have plenty of other things and still also use this mind pattern to strengthen themselves it is one of the ways in which the self seeks to add more to itself and everybody has it to a greater or lesser degree the need to be right the need therefore for somebody else to be wrong so now that you can see that and now that your sense of self since you are here is less and less dependent on thought forms the need to be annoyed with others which means to make them wrong will also lessen because you no longer need to strengthen that ultimately illusory sense of self and so gradually comes then a freedom from that mind pattern and then suddenly you may find that that very mind pattern the same person who made annoyed you so

many times suddenly the same situation happens again and you just go oh it's gone the reaction may be gone traffic driving there are people who are looking for someone to be annoyed with even while they drive and before they you know it and everybody in this room who drives a car probably has experienced being shouted at by another driver well I have and the driver shouts you idiot get your license or whoever gave you a license or something worse and now this is what then happens if you are inside you sense what that feels like when somebody does that even if you know that that person you obviously is very stupid you might say and yet you feel injured you feel a little bit less in your sense of self that is the mind based image of me if somebody calls you you idiot a little bit it removes something from you that feels I'm a great person and suddenly your sense of self is a little bit diminished this can also happen through any criticism or anything you are not and again usually the unconscious repair mechanism immediately jumps into action and in a simple traffic situation you repair your sense of self simply by shouting back something worse and you suddenly feel repaired and that process is unconscious usually people just do it it's it's and this to jump in and repair an injured sense of self the little me is always waiting for to do the repair job in any situation to justify something to become defensive if somebody says you didn't do that yes I did maybe you very well know that you didn't but in that criticism the mind made self feels diminished and whether it's true or not doesn't matter to the mind made self it's not interested in truth it's interested in preserving it's sense of self the same can happen in a discussion on argument you put forward your mental position with great conviction and the other person very simply tells you you're completely wrong your facts are all wrong and shows you this is how it is and suddenly the unconscious and automatic repair mechanism jumps into action and you say no these figures are wrong I know they're wrong and you you fabricate something simply to preserve your sense of self you say this is how it is he said that you quote something from somebody who never said that just because when you when you need to preserve your sense of self and it's a question of life or death when you have no other identity it's a question of life or death whether you are right or wrong so the truth becomes unimportant whether I survive in my sense of self that's what matters and again it's an unconscious movement and it's all part of the mad world that humans create when they don't know who they are beyond mental content beyond thought forms of me so they struggle and struggle to preserve their sense of self and strengthen it another mad way of strengthening it is to diminish somebody else's sense of self through some comment through saying something and in its madness the egoic sense of self feels stronger when it can diminish somebody else so you can you criticize somebody or and suddenly you feel you have grown because that person has shrunk and it's all in the realm of illusion a similar thing is envy and a certain structure of somebody has something and because the mind made self equates having with identity because the object that you possess has a corresponding thought form to it the thought form is what really matters not the object because out of the thought form I derive my sense of self so here I let's say I buy a certain type of car on the most simple level and my thought the thought form of my car is there mine now this word mine in the mind made

sense of self is an extremely important word mine it's used all the time and all kinds of claims are made through using the word mine the child already starts when he says my toy it has identified not the toy isn't important but the toy becomes a thought form invested with self so I am in the thought form of that thing this is the beginning of the illusion unfortunately children have to go through that it seems at least so far they have had to so you can't tell a child you must not use the word mine because it will take you into illusion so it starts with that and in that the child feels it has grown a little because it the child has added the toy as a thought form to its sense of self and then the child suffers tremendously when somebody destroys the toy or takes it away because then the thought form has no basis anymore there and begins to crumble again it loses some of its little sense of self it's not fully developed at all the little that's there in the content of the mind crumbles and it's very painful and that same pattern when this child becomes an adult he or she has added many minds already my this my knowledge my opinions my maybe my good looks if they have good looks my whatever and so there's somebody you buy a new car which is the equivalent of the toy of the child exactly the same the thought form mine associated with that mine new whatever and in that you have expanded a little because your car is bigger than many other people's cars therefore you must be bigger the thought form is very attractive of my car big me big bigger than bigger than most people because of course you have to compare yourself so you look around how many bigger cars are there than mine mine and you feel while you're sitting in it you feel a sense of expansion self has grown grown and then your colleague drives into the parking lot with a one that's twice as expensive as yours and this is called then envy because you think you have shrunk again and you don't want him to feel good about this car and then you say have by any chance have you read the latest quality ratings for Mercedes cars are not what they used to be it's fallen to 12th place you may have paid too much for your car and then you feel you have removed this thought form from him the self in the egoic madness you believe that by diminishing his sense of self which you have just done of course because he will say no I haven't read the quality ratings and so you feel you have grown because one person has shrunk and in the comparative evaluation of me you have grown again and this is how envy often works envy means I feel less because you have more and then I'm going to try to take that away from you so that you can't derive a self from that anymore or if you might say even friends do that you might say you meet your friend and she bought a new dress and you feel suddenly yours is not as good this diminished and without knowing it without thinking of it just something comes out of your mouth and says oh this would look great on your sister and so these are the games that this entity plays and it goes into other forms of madness worse than this the need to be right can take on many forms but it's amazing when you see it it's so obvious what it's trying to do it's also so obvious it doesn't really work it never never for long and then you have to look to the next thing and the defensiveness that comes with it the needing amazing this is humans have been trapped in that state of consciousness for such a long time and so deeper and deeper identified with thought forms until finally that human state becomes very

dysfunctional and there's nothing wrong with that being dysfunctional it is as it is and right now it's dysfunctional it has to be otherwise it wouldn't be it's an evolutionary cycle that humans have gone through which started when they ate the apple because that is the arising of thought as it says clearly they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil suddenly they were able to think and judge and evaluate good bad like dislike separate the beginning of separation a little separation from the totality and separating the world up into segments and compartments until finally from the first apple and finally you get the PhD about the tiniest of segments and Shakespeare said nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so in one of his plays nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so he saw that it always is as it is but thinking makes good and bad and there we have the story of the apple they ate of the tree of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and immediately what then developed was a self consciousness a sense of self and what is also told in the story of that is they suddenly felt uncomfortable with themselves oh no clothes it was a bit fast and they felt ashamed they had the beginning of a self image arose a me uneasy and that was only the beginning that was the loss of Eden which I'm told the translation of which means the place of joy and so then after a while things came in like work work unheard of before they started thinking life wouldn't be divided into these things of leisure and work absurd but then work started a new word came into work condemned to work whatever beautiful way they it's put in the story of Genesis effort comes in sweating by the sweat of your I can't remember what it says so it was the beginning of effort and so gradually gradually thought it became an incredible thing very empowering on the one hand the arising of thought amazing humans became the dominant species very quickly through thought and could all do all kinds of things through thought it couldn't an evolutionary cycle and gradually they lost their natural state of connectedness with the one with the source of all life which they had as their natural state didn't even know it and gradually all their sense of self was derived from thought movement and that's where in this evolutionary cycle things became more and more dysfunctional more and more suffering more and more violence more and more humans killed by other humans worse and worse and then gradually in its final stages that state of consciousness becomes a threat to the planet itself that state of consciousness because it's in its final stage it's so dysfunctional and this is why now humans change or they die out as a species because the state of consciousness that they are in is too dysfunctional for humanity to survive if nothing changes and that's why it has to change or we die so or one or the other as a species which isn't such it's sad but millions of planets billions of planets galaxies billions of galaxies each galaxy billions can't express it how many life forms how many forms consciousness takes how many forms it can flower through any form if the planet then ever recovers consciousness might flower through birds or some totally new life form so but but we are here which is a good sign perhaps humanity is going to make it and perhaps you are part of this transformation that is happening in human consciousness happening now not going to happen let's not make it into some future event projecting again a thought form of future something is going to happen to free me no it can only

happen now how by inner alignment with is you can the doorway into freedom is in the now the doorway into freedom is not in the future it cannot come in the future because there is no such thing otherwise you create a new idealized version of a perfect self me enhanced version of me improved just as they say with advertising greatly improved better than ever me me and not realize that you need to again you would be looking to some adding and not realizing that the essence is already there in you nothing needs to be added you can play with adding learning something new adding new friends even adding a new car not anymore in the service of self you might just enjoy sitting in this comfortable car it's not fulfilling when it's there to feed yourself after a little while the car becomes unfulfilling when it's designed to feed your sense of self and then you might switch to a bicycle there are people on bicycles who have a stronger sense of self than people in BMWs that's possible too it's not necessarily the people in the BMWs usually yes but not always that they because a person in a bicycle can have the self image of me the one who has gone beyond attachment to all these material things and that becomes a thought form just as strong as a thought form of me big BMW the thought form of me is the one who is superior to all these un-evolved humans in their big cars and so you can be on your bicycle and go I am so much more evolved than you is the assumption even the thought might not even arise literally in that way but it's implied so thought forms the self is very cunning it may have rejected the BMW maybe it had all the money and you gave it away but still a new thought form came of me grown in stature it will grasp at anything to strengthen its sense of self if at any way you can be more of something because the comparative element is very strong in the egoic sense of self there must be more of something more right more more wealthy more strong more spiritual more if all that fails more miserable than you nobody has been treated more unfairly by life than me a new thought form develops that's what life did to me that's what they did to me human beings did that to me and a strong thought form can develop around failure which is another story in the head me the one who has failed it's all been in vain all for nothing all the struggling I failed miserably I failed in my relationship I failed in my business I failed my exams and so a very unhappy thought form of me the miserable one can be just as strong as a thought form of me the one who is better than most others both can be equally strong thought forms and both are comparative and both operate on the principle of more more me more than whatever more is doesn't really matter as long as more and you find the strangest things that which goes even so far as to say I am more ill than you I knew somebody who would say whenever you said I have a headache he would say you have a headache I have had a headache for weeks now and so what he's really saying is you little worm you talk to me about pain tell me about pain I know more about pain than you and this is wherever you look you see those structures at work in humans of course when you look you see it's quite mad but it's normal all the human drama is made out of that stuff what humans what they preoccupy themselves with what occupies their mind their thoughts is that drama that comes out of those mind structures of the self and it's all they talk about it and think about it and finally it's reduced to smoke they drop dead and the drama dissolves and again we must

go to Shakespeare with his beautiful words full of sound and fury signifying nothing human existence full of sound and fury signifying nothing so this is the dilemma of human existence in its present evolutionary stage that is coming to an end undoubtedly ah amazing and there's a nice line out of one Star Trek movie when they travel back to the 20th century in some time warp and they walk through the city San Francisco wherever it is in the 20th century coming from the 24th century and they say they see the paranoia of people everybody looking at them suspiciously and they say it's a miracle they ever made it out of the 20th century it's very liberating for us here to recognize human dysfunction and human madness and see it for what it is one might think that it's depressing to see it but it's liberating because when you recognize dysfunction human dysfunction when you see it the seeing is the arising of that which is beyond the madness when you see madness even in yourself you are no longer completely mad because the seeing is there the conscious the awareness is there that sees the seeing does not need to adopt some kind of position towards it and say dreadful or feel guilty about being mad madness is not a personal matter it's not your personal problem if there are still elements of madness in your life and it may well be it's not a personal problem it's simply the human condition in its present evolutionary stage is still operating in you that's all and so you sometimes get annoyed with people or shout at them not a personal matter at all this is just and you are already seeing it so the freedom is already beginning now of seeing that mind movement the conditioned mind movement I saw this film recently Beautiful Mind which is about the actual life of a person who later received the Nobel Prize for something he was an academic at university totally immersed in his thoughts a genius on some level of thought and one small area of thought but he became insane he had hallucinations he saw people that weren't there he had discussions with people that were not there and he got totally drawn into that became totally dysfunctional was taken to a mental home the viewer of the film does not know that these are hallucinations until he himself begins to recognize that these are hallucinations it's quite well done and then comes the moment of freedom when he realizes the madness of it he realizes these things are not real and yet they are still there that's the arising of sanity which is not the immediate end of madness the hallucinations continue but he actually talks to the people that appear in front of him and says I'm not going to talk to you again he knows that it's a hallucination and he says I'll leave you now I won't interact with you before he reacted now awareness has come in and there's the space of presence and to the end of his life apparently he still would occasionally see these hallucinations but no longer reacting as if they were real simply allowed them watched them allowed them to be and so gradually something must have emerged in him that was from a deeper place than the conditioned mind that comes out in the film it could have come out a little bit more but it comes out anyway so the end of madness is seeing madness and not adopting some position and say oh there's something wrong with me I am mad deriving a sense of self from what is the human condition and feel guilty about it or inadequate or not good enough nothing to do with you you are the arising presence you are the witnessing consciousness not the forms the

conditioned forms in your mind or in your emotional field it's not who you are so then it's not a personal problem anymore oh that's a relief and so evolution is happening by itself and these words are part of the evolution that is happening by itself the words also happen by themselves they're not planned beforehand they just happen they are created by the collective energy field of this group there's nothing personal in this and they happen to come out of this form because it's hollow enough hollow enough open enough for it to come through this form that's all that could come through any other hollow form wherever there's an opening consciousness will move through it does not evaluate people and say you are worthy i'm going to move through you it moves where there's an opening it doesn't matter whether the before there was a human being who was a criminal and suddenly an opening happens there suddenly complete surrender happens there and the opening is there and then consciousness moves and maybe in the person who thought he or she was worthy because he'd been practicing meditation for 30 years it doesn't come through because the opening isn't there because there's a continuing self image of me the spiritual one me better than and there may be a criminal in prison who is driven into total surrender to what is by unbearable suffering self created so nobody is worthy or not worthy because some people feel and these are two aspects of self image some people feel they are more worthy than others and other people feel surely I'm not worthy yet for enlightenment or liberation surely I have to struggle a bit more so that I can really be worthy which is again an image of me the worthy one so wonderful to see madness and as we happened here it's also liberating in itself you can laugh at the human condition you could also cry of course it's quite if you let's adjust the other polarity you it is a tragedy and a comedy at the same time cry at the end of your life if you think that's all there is to humanity you would never stop crying but because something new is arising now you can laugh and there's already freedom in that so the rest of this day feel free to laugh or to cry or both and if you choose to remain silent maybe we can set aside a few tables dinner tables for those who don't want to speak and then other tables for those who want to engage in speech and perhaps also in listening or in putting forward their point of view a moment of stillness is there still a little bit of waiting inside you if there is you can notice it it's the mind it's the movement of thought it's enough to notice it because thought waits for the next thought the next event the next object in consciousness and when you notice it notice is a little word it doesn't seem to mean very much to notice something but there's very significant whether you are waiting completely identified with the movement of waiting or whether you notice suddenly there's waiting in you that's the mind and the noticing is presence the seeing so you can see the movement a slight very perhaps very slight here impatience very slight ok get on with it I once gave a talk in one of the busiest cities in the world Hong Kong and somebody who later came to almost every talk he came to the first talk ever in between two business appointments I think and there was a silent space before the talk as there usually is and later he described to me his mind movements while he was waiting for the talk to start for god's sake get on with it we are busy people here we haven't got what are you waiting for what are you trying to do what's this and

he almost got up and left and when finally I started to speak now here there may be just a remnant of that mind movement which isn't personal a tiny a habit a mental habit and you discover even here perhaps particularly here many mental habits habit patterns that still operate even here including perhaps certain patterns to do with the ego that we talked about that was so funny yesterday and you may catch yourself while talking to somebody after lunch and you may suddenly detect a little statement coming out of your mouth whose purpose was to impress the other person which means to enhance improve the view that the other person has of you and then the ego can use that thought form somebody else's view of me becomes similar to an object not everything is to do with the ego is material objects intangible things are equally important somebody's opinion of me and then this person suddenly oh if you know so much or whatever it may be and then the ego seeks to add it to itself in its illusion it feels bigger when you've just managed to impress somebody with your knowledge or even more absurd things somebody you know this famous person your friend you just it just slips into a conversation and through association with that thought form this is also an attempt to add more to the self to the sense of self feels a little bit bigger and that's usually called ego but it really is only ego when you don't know what you're doing when you're completely in that movement it's ego the moment you know it it's not really ego it's a mind pattern and they still those mind patterns have a certain momentum still so ego really definition of ego is unconscious identification with mind but when the mind and its content and its patterns are seen are noticed it's not really ego anymore you've already stepped out of ego but what is still operating is patterns they have a momentum you may not become free that quickly of those mind patterns and emotional patterns that go with that freedom is not in eliminating all of that but in no longer mistaking all of that for yourself that's freedom patterns still operate the human form has certain limitations on all levels certain patterns may operate until the very end there have even been liberated teachers who continued smoking every day and people said how can you do this you're supposed to

[Speaker 4] (4:03:18 - 4:03:18)

be

[Speaker 1] (4:03:18 - 5:00:02)

liberated it's just a habit so there is a looseness or rather a spaciousness that in which some of these patterns still operate a few may suddenly disappear a few may be persistent and they operate for a while and so this the spaciousness that is there when a space consciousness arises in that those things are being seen oh accept it because whatever is whether on the outer level or the inner level whatever is is as it is right now you have to what can you do it is other things change very quickly when presence or space consciousness is there suddenly that pattern is dissolved and other patterns stick around for longer okay it doesn't become a problem you don't become a problem to

yourself anymore you don't you're not a cause of trouble to yourself and then it spreads to others if you are a problem to yourself it's almost certain that you will be a problem to other people because problem making spreads a very deep seated pattern also we may have touched on that briefly is the need to talk about other people in a slightly superior way sometimes called gossip and in certain circles when people get together eighty percent or more of their conversation is about some absent person and it's usually what he or she did or said or didn't do just imagine what he said to me he said and then I said it's a very deep seated thing in a very subtle sense every time you talk about somebody else in that way it's the illusory self gets strengthened because it puts itself by implication not doesn't say so openly in a superior position I am more than better than is implied because you are the judge of this person's behavior and it is judged as inadequate or whatever somehow inadequate at least not up to your standards and so that's a subtle satisfying way for the self to feel bigger to add more because the need for more we talked about it I am more and also right comes in again to be right the other in some way is made wrong and so you have this group of people and then that person comes and then they stop talking of course and then other person leaves and then they talk about that person it happens in relatively unconscious circles but some of that most people carry inside and this may linger for a while and then you notice it sometimes the noticing comes after it's just happened and then the noticing may come in the middle of a pattern and then the noticing may come when the impulse to say something comes and then it's just noticed the energy behind it and then the freedom comes in there it's possible for the impulse to come as an energy form and pass through you without becoming a thought or word so it passes through and and then after a while it may not even come anymore so some quite a few things dissolve through the awareness the spacious awareness other things may stick around for quite some time and none of them is personal it's patterns in consciousness one could say ultimately there's absolutely nothing personal in your life there's only the essential I am I am underneath all the patterns and that is the most personal or the only personal thing but really it goes far beyond the person the thing that Descartes looked for but he got stuck in the level of thought that which is beyond any doubt at any moment right now this whole gathering may be a dream who knows you can't be sure that it's not a dream and I mentioned when you wake up at home next week there may be a doubt in your mind was that a dream only for a moment but even within even if this is a dream somebody must be dreaming it there must be a a conscious space a consciousness in which that dream happens and that is real in any dream or in any illusion at the core of it there must be something real otherwise it wouldn't be it could not be known there's nobody there to know it so there's the knower at the deepest level and that is a sense of I am-ness all the other patterns are temporary forms external forms inner forms content all this is content the external content of this moment this room this place the voice whatever inner content may be operating inside you as patterns in consciousness thought movements emotional movements one thing that remains one way in which we can put it is to say what remains is it's always now it can only happen in now the deeper meaning of that is

now is the unchanging space in which it happens and now is not separate from who you are in your essence that's why now could never leave you and no matter what happens to you on the level of form or on the level of content because it's possible that your life may dramatically change within a year all the external situations of your life could change dramatically totally you may be rich now and you may suddenly be penniless or the other way around everything changes or there could even be deeper changes even the inner on the level of conditioning things could change and there are people in this room who have already experienced in this lifetime what seems like different incarnations they've gone through so many changes they've been so many different people already they've been a stockbroker they've been a hippie they've been a successful businessman they've been a sadhu in India they've done it all squeezed into one lifetime different incarnations it seems completely different roles but in each role if that person had looked deeply within there would always have remained an essence that is nothing changed the deepest sense of I am-ness doesn't matter whether you're a sadhu in India or a stockbroker in New York there are people who are stockbrokers and then become sadhus and they're looking for something that is available to them both as a stockbroker or as a sadhu the innermost sense of being or knowing beyond form beyond roles beyond content of consciousness which is simply the space of consciousness which is the essence of now so on the deepest level the sense of I am is always there and it doesn't depend on this or that so it's not you don't need to change the outer form although this may happen to know yourself you could know yourself sitting at your desk in New York there have been people going to India and become sadhus and after a few years became frustrated still not found myself they adopted a new role in a very subtle way the ego came back in and a new mental form arose as me the holy man the spiritual one identification with form comes back it creeps in amazing and to go beyond that all that's needed is go deeply into the isness of this no change is required for you to know yourself at the deepest level no time is required no change is required what is now is always enough you have to align yourself with that isness and then there is a depth to it before it's no it's not fulfilling this now isn't fulfilling i want a different fulfilling now not this unfulfilling now that's the pattern so they know they never go into the depths they remain shallow look to the future a thought form and the strange thing is the form of now the forms change now in a couple of days the now will be filled with other forms it won't be this scenery it will be some other scenery but the form that this moment takes the only moment there is is never that fulfilling it quickly turns into unfulfilling an obstacle almost to where i want to go normal that's normal existence the now is an obstacle to where i want to go to that state of being fully myself free fully me not yet i'm not yet that so most people run away from the now because they see it as an obstacle as not enough as limiting the form of it so they never got to the essence of now because they don't go deep enough into the form of now they don't accept the form of now they run away from this so they never reach the essence of now and it's after you've run away from now for a few years you may be ready and you may realize no matter what form there is in my life what form appears in the now it's not that satisfying

for very long the form changes or it loses its satisfactoriness and then you stay with what is and the rejection of the form that this moment takes drops away you realize what i call the inevitability of whatever happens because it's connected to the totality nothing is separate even raising my right arm like this you could say there's something inevitable to it or the mind we looked at that the mind could question it and say you didn't have to raise your right arm but it happened it could not have been otherwise if it happened the entire universe has brought this about and this movement may be connected to countless other movements in the universe because ultimately space and time have no absolute reality so just one movement on this plane could be connected to millions of other movements on other planes and almost certainly is so because of that deep connectedness nothing that is could be otherwise because it is connected to the whole it is one with the whole the human mind because it cuts things up we looked at that takes a segment out of the web of the totality and calls it a separate event itself it makes the human mind itself into a segment and calls it this is a separate me and to this separate me these separate events happen to me and the me is a reactive me it doesn't like what's happening and so you realize there is no separate event there is just the form that this now takes is inevitable has to be the way it is because the entire universe has created this moment and then you can let go of the absurd belief that it should be otherwise you don't argue with is that is the transition that's all that happens no longer you realize yes yes you can't argue with what is then that you could call surrender the deepest meaning is you enter the surrendered state of consciousness surrendered means aligned with what is no more only what is now not surrendered to a story resigned to a story in the head if you've just lost ten million dollars you've lost your big house you've lost your car and all the mind forms that go with this have crumbled the story of me that was so great has collapsed and there you are sitting standing at a bus stop waiting for the bus now to some people surrender they think means to say okay I might as well accept that my life has failed that I'm nobody now I might as well accept that twenty years of hard work was in vain I have to accept it that my marriage also has collapsed I've failed at that so I might as well accept that my children have rejected me okay I have to accept that that's that's being becoming more deeply involved in a story and strengthening the story of me and saying this is how it is I have to resign myself to the fact that this story of mine is so sad this is all on the level of telling yourself a story and deriving your sense of self from the telling of that story and that sense of self here will be a sad one but the egoic pattern will cling to anything it will happily adjust itself to a sad sense of self from a victorious sense of self and change its story and then tell other people about how all the life collapsed and then you can get an identity from that it's nothing to do with surrender you might call that resignation so resignation is not what we are talking about surrender only concerns this moment because the rest is thought forms anything that is not now is a thought form that's well you might say but didn't it happen yes but you have to remember it now and it's a thought form so all you surrender means to align yourself with this moment only so in the case of the stock broker who lost it all who is now standing at the bus stop the surrender in his case is

here I am standing and it's not so much telling himself anything just aligning himself with that moment that he begins to look around there's a tree and there's a spaciousness in which the tree is being perceived as we've been living that here the spaciousness and the sky is there it was there when he had ten million dollars in the bank it's still there and there's a bird alive has no story and the body is breathing the air is fresh or not fresh but breathing happens cars are going past some you get it might be wet who knows you got splashed now if you were in the story getting splashed would add to the sad story this is what my life has come to and then there's simply water it is as it is what can you do it must be part of the totality of the universe for me to get splashed otherwise it wouldn't happen so you learn how incredible it can be when you live in alignment with what is with this and you suddenly feel an aliveness inside you the body is still alive the cells of the body are alive and there's a this moment isn't really that bad unless I begin to judge it in some way through a mind form it is and then the bus comes in and you sit on it and you watch the landscape go past beautiful I spent many years traveling on buses and watching the landscapes go past and if there had been a mind with a story it would say you're now in your forties you still haven't got a car you have no pension plan you have no insurance nobody thinks anything of you I actually heard that story from my family but it was very satisfying to sit on a bus so it's we can step out of the story which is the conceptualized sense of self into the immediacy and the aliveness of now and that's the only thing that requires alignment that's the only thing that's real is this moment and the amazing thing is that change happens much more quickly when it's the form of this moment is not resisted first you go beyond the form because the form let's continue in this particular example the form now looks very limiting because this person before might have had more freedom on one level and now because of no money he's limited to waiting for a bus and suddenly a deep sense of space is around the form of now a peace is around it a spaciousness is around it a deeper sense of presence is there while the form happens and that comes when the form is not resisted then you go beyond the form and that means no matter what happens there is a depth to that there's a space in which this happens and you are the space you could say the entire room here is happening in the space that you are that is consciousness this could if it suddenly went dark here the content would suddenly have disappeared you couldn't see anything anymore the content of this room would have disappeared the content in the space and all that's left is spaciousness stillness presence these are only words just that the innermost sense of being being space so one could say that nothing ever happens outside of you everything that happens in your field of consciousness happens within the space that you are so in the deeper sense you never actually go anywhere now remains always as the space the forms change in that space and it looks as if you were going somewhere but all it means is the scenery changing the same space is always there doesn't change so all that's needed for freedom is to align yourself with this moment not the story that you step out of the story you don't get stuck in the story of me you don't repeat the story to yourself in your head which is what people do because it strengthens their sense of self which is thought based here you go beyond the thought

based sense of self to somewhere deeper and then the most amazing things happen often to change the situation all that you have needed to open the portal so that intelligence could operate in your life and the portal is opened through alignment to now then the intelligence the one intelligence can suddenly operate in your life and you suddenly encounter a helpful something helpful comes into the space of now because now isn't resisted now becomes friendly you've become friendly with now first then now becomes friendly with you and so you get on the bus to continue with the failed stock broker and suddenly you meet an old friend there says oh I haven't seen you in 10 years who has some suggestion to make oh I have a house I need somebody to look after my house on a beautiful lake in the north of Italy and you say okay I have nowhere to live I'll go there the strange thing is helpful factors come in very quickly when the resistance to life which is the resistance to now is let go and that's amazing not that you will ever encounter some external situation that is totally and forever fulfilling and never limiting that cannot happen the only thing that is unlimited and continuously forever timelessly fulfilling is the space of now which is the essence of who you are but that which happens in the space of now is not forever eternally limitless and fulfilling it's in the nature of forms that arise in the space of now to embody some kind of limitation in your life and that begins with the physical form of your body no matter how strong and developed and beautiful or whatever your physical body is at some point you encounter the limitations that come with having a physical body for a long time if you have a wonderful body you have a thought form a corresponding thought form as me great body and that is satisfying for a while it says to the story of me you can add that as important content that's me and then if that doesn't move the thought form of great body persists and gradually you reach the age of 70 80 90 and then there comes the conflict between the thought form and the actual body which shows its limitations more and more and in that conflict it's possible that there's a denial for a long time that no I'm still strong and finally when you're walking up 10 flights of stairs at age 80 and somebody a 20 year old woman rushes up past you and suddenly you feel totally inadequate and it can come as a shock the thought forms suddenly crumbles and so it's amazing what people cling to in their search for self it could also be somebody who is extremely good looking then it becomes a thought form of me and you get a lot of feedback from other people the other who want you and every form that arises in the space of now sooner or later the form will be a limitation on your life somehow even if you lived here you might think if I had a house here and enough money don't have to work anymore I could just live here completely at peace in these beautiful surroundings and I would be totally okay I would invite my friends and have good meals meditations that would be and if that actually happened you would encounter even here the limitations of the forms for a while it's satisfying and then you sit here and suddenly restlessness comes in boredom not enough oh hmm it's always the same view and after a year you may catch yourself not looking anymore it's there and maybe this wasn't the right place it's not that fulfilling here I must have chosen the wrong place I have to start looking again or it may come in some other way if you go to a pacific island beautiful climate everything wonderful as friends of mine went

to Bali and paradise surrounded by paradise and they were cooking their first meal in open air and then they saw a rat looking through the window that wasn't supposed to happen and so you can't so you have one limitation as I've just I've told the story before somebody who is unknown works as a waitress wants to be an actress can't get a job has an unhappy story very limiting you get paid whatever ten dollars an hour can't even go anywhere limiting three years later she's famous everybody knows her big house big car in the papers but she's trapped in her house she can't go out anymore because riots happen whenever she comes people go there she is it's always some new limitation that comes in and they say that wasn't supposed to happen it's in the nature of the world of business run away for the rest of your life you can improve your life situation that's good you can play with it it's good to make a million dollars it's probably better to have one dollar in the bank but to believe that will will free you or fulfill you or make you complete in some way, doesn't happen. That can be found whether you have \$1 or 10 million in the bank.

The rest is a game with form, which you cannot even not play because you're here as a form. So you play the game with form, you get, you do things, but no longer seeking something in the world of form that it cannot give you, which ultimately means yourself. That deepest satisfaction, that deepest fulfillment, seeking that in the world of content, because that's what form is, content in consciousness is what form is, seeking that there is continuous frustration, disappointment, and then you can use expressions like that he let me down, she let me down, which means disappointed me, lets you, strange expression, that situation lets me down.

Every situation, every person that you look to for self-fulfillment is going to let you down. And that's the complaint of the mind, that people let you down, and situations let you down. And fame, even fame wasn't supposed to be like that.

So content has to be seen for what it is as ultimately limiting and limited, and that's good. And to express that in general language, not in specific language that we use here, where we speak of the content of consciousness or object consciousness and space consciousness. Space consciousness is fulfillment by itself.

It needs nothing. It is already fully what it is. Object consciousness is limited.

Now, to use a different language, we could say, when you realize that, you no longer demand that something or someone in this world, a situation, a place, a person, should make you happy, because they won't. It's not in the nature of a situation, a place or a person to make you happy, fulfilled, complete you, because that's really what making you happy means. When people say, I'm looking for the man or woman to make me happy, what they mean is an innermost sense of being fully yourself now through adding this man or woman to your life.

Then he or she makes you happy. For a while, it works, and then it doesn't work.

Everybody who falls in love realizes that illusion that this person is going to complete me doesn't last very long.

If there are two people living together and they say, well, we are happy, what you're saying doesn't apply to us. That means in their relationship, whether they know it or not, something has already emerged that is beyond object consciousness. In other words, the space in their relationship is already there.

Space consciousness is already there in their relationship, and the relationship happens. You're no longer looking to the relationship as such to make you happy, but the context, one could say, in which the relationship happens is fulfilling, and the context is space or spaciousness. That simply means in concrete terms to be with your partner and sit, be, lie with him or her in that state of presence, a state of no thought, just spacious presence.

It can begin with listening, listening to your partner in this giving him or her space to be, not immediately imposing thought forms. So then a relationship can work, but it's not the relationship then that is making you fulfilled or happy. It's because you dwell in the deeper dimension of space consciousness, and that is why the relationship is fulfilling and a place is fulfilling.

Suddenly, no matter where you go, it's actually okay. Because that, so we could say, if you still don't know what these words are pointing to, you become familiar with the space of now, which is deeper than what happens in it. You know what that is, the space of now, as spacious awareness, just that.

Then the world is suddenly quite all right, even very nice. And the fact that things come and go is actually welcomed. You don't need to cling to one or not want that one.

Forms are still limiting, but inside you're free of those limitations. And this realization has happened to people who became totally limited by some physical form, either people whose body became ill, who couldn't move by themselves anymore, who encountered extreme forms of limitation, people who were in prison, sitting in his little cell all day long, people who were in very dangerous life situation where they didn't know whether they would survive another day. Situations that usually would be called extremely unsatisfying, extremely, the extreme forms of limitation.

And some of those people, through an intelligence that was greater than their mind, let go completely of resistance to the seemingly unacceptable limitation in their lives. And they just, it became so painful to resist continuously, and everybody would say, isn't it normal to feel unhappy when you're in a prison cell? Yes, of course, it's normal.

Isn't it normal to feel miserable when the body can't move anymore? Of course, it's normal. It's normal to feel that this situation is unacceptable and to suffer is normal.

But it is also possible to go beyond normal and some people have done it and they have spoken about it. And what they described, those probably were the first spiritual teachers to whom life did something that usually would be called dreadful. And the suffering that came became so unbearable that something snapped inside and the resisting entity that said, this is the most, that hated themselves and life and everything, suddenly snapped because the burden of suffering couldn't, was becoming unbearable.

And suddenly something snapped and suddenly the prisoner or the person in the wheelchair sits there and says, what's happening? And suddenly an influx of so much peace and aliveness and nothing has changed. And then they sit there and look at the walls.

It's the peace that suddenly overcomes them and they don't know how it happened. And of course, maybe at some point they understand it happened because the now, which seemed so unacceptable, was no longer resisted. And so that entity, the self, the mind-made self that lives on resistance to now dissolves and suddenly space consciousness, unconditioned consciousness emerges.

And when that emerges in your life, it is, there's always an important aspect of that is a great sense of peace, no matter what is happening around you. So it's people who are brought to it are not brought to it because suddenly, usually because suddenly things get so much better in their lives and finally they get so much better and better and better and finally they become enlightened. Usually it's the other way.

They get worse and worse and they lose and become more limited and more limited and until finally something snaps and there it is. So it's through loss and limitation in the absence of a spiritual teaching that you become free internally through loss and limitation, but only potentially. Not every human being can walk through that doorway that opens when there is loss and limitation in your life.

Most humans would still look the other way and look to more future. Don't look at the loss, don't look at the limitation, try to get away from this. So then you're sitting in prison and then for 10 years you're working out plans to escape.

And you try this and you try that or you predict when I get out, I'm going to do that. And then you live totally there. I'm finally going to make it when I get out.

So there's potentially through loss and limitation which are called the worst things that could happen to a person are actually because life is ultimately not cruel, but benevolent. Through loss and limitation, the doorway potentially is there. In other words, it opens.

Whether you walk through, we don't know. And so that is, everybody has a spiritual teacher, even people who have never looked at a spiritual book or even heard of any

spiritual teaching. And that is encountering loss and limitation in your life.

And then when that happens, potentially the doors open. Through loss, it opens because loss on whatever level, loss of possessions, loss of status, loss of opinion that other people have of you, whatever kind of loss, the thought forms that are associated with those contents, opinions of other people, of me, possessions that are mine, achievements that are mine and they are lost. The thought forms that had been created that gave you a sense of self also crumble when the external object is lost.

The inner object, the thought form crumbles and that is suffering. It's called suffering because the thought form had self in it. It was me in it.

And me is dying when there's great loss. Me is dying. But potentially now where the form has just collapsed, the thought form, there is a little open space before there was a form, an object covering up the open space.

Now it's dissolved and an open space happens inside you when you don't run away from it and don't deny it and resist it. Through that open space comes unconditioned, what I now sometimes call space consciousness. And when it comes through, it's great peace suddenly.

Something is gone. I should be feeling dreadfully unhappy, but suddenly comes through the opening, comes emptiness as they call it in Buddhism. Before there was something, now there's nothing.

It's through the hole comes what Buddhists call emptiness, which is also fullness, but nobody can, not one designation is right. Space consciousness, presence, simple I amness because I am that and that and that has collapsed. I thought I was that, but that's gone.

And then I thought I was that. I thought I was a successful stockbroker, that's collapsed. I thought I was a husband, that's collapsed.

I thought I was a good father, but my children left me, that's collapsed. One thing after another collapsed and leaves nothing but holes. And that's great because the formless, when a form dissolves, the formless is there.

So I am that is gone. I'm not that anymore. And sometimes all that's left is I am, but there's nothing that anymore that all objects have gone.

And I'm left with bare, naked, I am. So life can do that to you. It removes things from you until you are left with the nakedness of all you know is a sense of beingness or presence, but that is deep and beautiful.

Before that got mixed up with being a stockbroker and being a father and being a

husband and being some other role. Those have collapsed. And so what's left is just being itself.

I amness itself. Wow. That is called realization, liberation.

On the mind level, you may not be able to say anything about it. And when people ask you, who are you? You might say, I don't know.

I don't know anymore. I thought for a long time, I knew who I was, but now I don't know anymore. And yet on some deep level, there is some kind of knowing, but I can't put it into words.

So those people became the first spiritual teachers who later had realized and could talk a little bit about what happened. They looked back and maybe they realized that surrender happened, complete surrender happened. The loss was not resisted.

The limitation was not resisted, and it became an opening. And then they talked about it and say, this could also happen to you. You're so unhappy.

It doesn't have to be like that. I was even more unhappy than you, and it came to an end. And so that was the beginning of a spiritual teaching.

And then they even created so-called monasteries, places where the others came. And in some cases, what they tried to do was to recreate the conditions that otherwise would happen to you naturally through life, that might have happened to them through life. So what they did was people come into the monastery and they say, okay, now, as you come in here, you lose your identity here.

First thing, you shave your head because hair has to do with external appearance, which is a thought form of me. Then you leave behind your clothes because that's another thought form, showing your status and all male and female, whatever. You leave behind your clothes.

Then you leave behind your name because that also is a thought form. So you get a new name, a spiritual name. Uh.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Dangerous, but. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

And they give you clothes that everybody wears the same clothes. So you cannot differentiate yourself from others. You can't compare yourself and say, mine is a bit nicer than yours, although they try to do that, right?

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. And so, and then they create conditions that are not satisfying. Not very much food.

You have to, no possessions. Nothing that really that you can call mine. And then you, many situations are created there that normally you would call unacceptable.

You have to get up at four in the morning and then you sit in meditation in a cold room. In Zen, they might even open the windows in the winter. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

And you sit facing the wall. Facing the wall, empty stomach, Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. A cold room.

You can imagine how much suffering arises if there is still a story and mind activity around this situation. Why did I ever come here? This is, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

This is madness. What am I doing here? And more mind activity, more.

Suffering is almost, they create the situation that would bring up a lot of resistance. And so you can watch the resistance. And it's possible if it works, it can take a long time.

If it works, and then they have other things in Zen. You meet the master. He asks you questions sometimes that have no logical answer.

Famous Zen questions. And you spend time, what's the answer to this? I have to.

And all designed to finally drive you to a point where the mind stops. It stops.

[Speaker 4] (5:00:03 - 5:00:09)

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

[Speaker 1] (5:00:09 - 5:48:14)

And suddenly there's this influx of peace and aliveness, even while you're sitting facing the wall. The stomach is still empty. The body is still cold.

And yet nobody is left to resist this moment. And so there's suddenly this influx of spacious presence of aliveness. And then the Zen master comes and asks you some nonsensical question and says, give me the answer now.

And suddenly a spontaneous answer comes out of your mouth. It may be nonsensical too, but the Zen master is only listening to what level the answer is coming from. And it comes from the deepest level spontaneously.

And the Zen master says, good. Or says nothing, walks away. Because the answer came from there, from the deepest place.

And it has, it's not what you say, it's where the answer comes from. So because whatever comes from directly out of the unconditioned consciousness has power, newness, and freshness to it. It doesn't matter what you say as an answer.

So that's because the Zen master could tell one person who says the same answer as the other person to one person, he says, you're wrong and hits you. And the other person, he says, good. So when you go into traditional, these monasteries that are the first monastery that arose were often designed really to recreate what otherwise happens through life naturally, what life does to you.

So things are taken away from you. They're not, not more things are given you, things are taken away. It's not that you encounter less limitations, you encounter more limitations through going into the monastery.

So the opposite of that would be the mind, the little self saying, if I could only find that ideal retreat place in California, where we get up to a beautiful breakfast, aesthetically, enormous amounts of fresh fruit and everything is totally healthy and full of life and aliveness, and there are flowers, there are birds. And the first thing after breakfast, you get body work done for two hours. And then you go into the pool.

And then you sit on a quiet terrace overlooking the ocean for one hour. And when it's time, then they have prepared your lunch. And you might think, well, now surely the situations must be ideal for me to reach enlightenment.

And you'll find this isn't working either. And after two months there, boredom sets in and discontent comes in and what am I doing here? And you go to sleep, you feel tired after getting up.

And it's sunny again, every day it's sunny. So the mind has certain ideas about how it's going to happen to me. Usually not correct ideas, because the mind thinks in terms of adding, something needs to be added for me, for it to happen.

Nothing needs to be added, it's here now. And you can know it now through no more adding being necessary at all, nothing needs to be added, nothing needs to be changed. And if you cannot realize presence now, at this moment, in other words, it's not going to get any better than this.

How could it? This is it, this is it. If you can't realize it now, then you will realize it through some, not adding, you'll realize it through some loss.

Okay, you can't lose. I mean, eventually you will realize, but this is the most gentle way. And if life hadn't already, probably, if you had not already come into contact in your life with limitation and with loss, probably you wouldn't even be here.

So that's already, the process has already started. It's only for quite a few of you, it's only by the grace of already having gone through major loss or having experienced major limitation in your life that you're here. And you may not know it, but the emergence of that which is unconditioned, the I am, is already happening.

It happened, perhaps, at that moment of great loss that you experienced, and you didn't know it. Something crumbled. Something also still resisted it, perhaps.

There was a reciprocal movement of resistance and something that you couldn't resist. So really, we're talking about death coming into your life in one form or another because loss means some form of death. And death is usually called bad by the mind, the worst thing that could happen.

Any kind of loss is a kind of death. If you derived your sense of self, from thought forms, because the thought forms crumble when there is loss, which is the me, crumbles. And the good thing is, you can't go through life without experiencing that.

It will come to everybody. So the potential, the doorway opens up even if you never come into contact with spiritual teaching, but it gets much easier through the grace of a spiritual teaching, the essence of which tells you, you don't need more time to be free, and you don't need more suffering. You don't.

If you see that clearly, you don't. Because this is your voluntarily embracing the end of the conceptualized sense of self in the head, the end of deriving your identity from mental content. And you are here, nobody forced you to come here.

So this is already happening in you. You are dying already. And perhaps the first part of that death was involuntary.

Life did something to you, removed something from you, or made you encounter extreme limitation. That part was involuntary, but that initiated the process, the emergence. And that brought you here.

And this part of the process, it gets much more pleasant because this is a voluntary embracing of the end of the conceptualized me in the head with its story. And that's a beautiful death that we are dying here. And ultimately, nothing real dies, only certain forms.

You don't even lose your memory. It's not a requirement. Memory remains.

You have a past, but you don't derive your identity from the story of me. The identity flows continuously out of the fullness of now, the aliveness of now, the power of now. That is your essence.

And now, what is now, except this, the space in which everything happens, the alive space in which everything happens. So freedom is here. The door is open, wide open, and you're walking through certain patterns, certain configurations in consciousness may remain, but the space is there around it.

The pain body may remain for a while, pain that humans carry in here from the past,

from the human past and your personal past. First, there's the pain from your personal past in childhood. Then there's the pain from human past, going back a long time of human madness, so much madness on the planet, so much suffering.

Every human carries pain, which is human pain. We know, most of you know about the pain body. And you carry that.

It lives in here, a little forms, emotional energy forms, painful energy, residues of past pain, emotional, trapped aliveness, not flowing. Old emotion that comes, pain that you suffer in your childhood is added to the pain that you already come into the world with. That is human pain.

This is the pain body. And so, more pain clings to it. It seeks pain.

It's a little entity, an emotional entity, dormant sometimes, active at other times. Active, it becomes when it needs more food. And then suddenly, a little trigger in your life, creates an enormous influx of pain.

The pain body is looking for more pain to feed on. And it moves into your mind. And then it gets hold of your thoughts.

And all your thoughts become painful thoughts, because the emotional energy of the pain body flows into your thoughts. It uses the structures of the egoic self, its thought structures, and makes them very unhappy. An already not-so-happy story then becomes dreadfully unhappy, because it's energized by past emotional human pain.

And it becomes a self. The illusion is there that this is my pain, me, my painful story, my drama. You're totally in it, and you're forced to think whatever the pain body's energy dictates.

Angry thoughts, if the predominant energy of the pain body is anger. Sad thoughts, fearful thoughts, what's going to happen to me? And then you imagine what's going to happen to you, and it's all bad.

And the emotion loves that. It feeds on thought, because thought is energy. Everything is energy.

Every thought you think is an energy form. The emotional entity renews itself through your negative thinking. It loves that.

And when it's active, it's feeding on your mind. And you are identified with it so much that you don't know it. All you know is that you are miserably unhappy, and there's a heaviness to your life.

And whatever you look, once the pain body's in your mind, whatever you look upon and interpret, you will look through the screen of the conditioning, which is human pain. So

you can imagine, I'm sure you know, how distorted your view of the world becomes, your view of other people, your view of your partner, your view of your life situation, your view of anything becomes, how distorted it becomes when you look at it through the veil of your pain. Everything becomes very negative and dreadful.

And so the pain body is having a good time adding to its energy field through your thinking. And this is the addiction to pain that humans carry. It's because of the pain body.

There is something in you that loves the drama and the heaviness of emotional pain. It's not you who you are beyond form. It's the pain body with which you identify as yourself.

But it's not enough. If you live with other people or partner, the pain body will feed on your partner. First, the pain body has to make your partner unhappy.

It can do that easily by pushing the right buttons. And then you get a feedback of pain from your partner. Drama in the relationship happens.

And at that moment, you want more of it because you are the pain body at that moment. More drama, please. And you will do everything to keep the drama going, but you are the pain body at that moment.

And it's feeding on the other person's pain. The other person's pain body probably has also awakened now and it's feeding on the reactions. So most relationships have to go through their drama again and again, periodically.

This is how relationships work, feeding their pain body. Then after a while, the pain body withdraws, has had enough, and you feel better, lighter for a while, the relationship is okay again. And you don't realize that you are condemned to repeating the same pattern again as soon as the pain body needs more pain.

That is the addiction that humans carry to pain, which is usually totally unconscious. And even people who've been engaged in spiritual work for many years, sometimes many of them get totally overtaken by the pain body when it comes because it sometimes has enormous energy behind it. So all that really you need to do is to see it for what it is, to watch it, recognize it as turbulence, as heaviness.

So watch the energy of it, feel it. And what can you do? Yeah, allow it to be, it is as it is at this moment.

But that is the key, is to see it. That means something is arising in you that is not part of that. You see that turbulence in you or the fear, the heaviness, and not even label it anymore, simply feel the energy.

It is energy movement. It becomes depersonalized when you see it. It's no longer a self

or me, it's human pain.

Even pain you can drop. It's energy moving. Maybe it's not very pleasant, it's heavy, but it's energy and you, it is as it is.

You recognize it as the pain body, you allow it to be and just watch it as it moves there. That means you've broken the vicious circle. It cannot then move into your mind and feed on your thinking.

It cannot then use other people. If you watch it directly, it cannot pretend to be you. That's the work.

So pain body can be a great awakener because every time it comes, it can deepen your presence. You have to be very alert to catch it when it comes. If you're not alert, before you know it, it's already using your mind.

It's already taken possession of that. Even at that point, it is possible to become conscious of it but a bit more difficult when it's already using your mind and you are involved in a stream of negative thinking. To wake up at that moment is possible, but more difficult.

Catch it when it first comes, but that requires alertness. And so it helps to, I sometimes say, feel the inner body. To have some attention in here is very helpful because that's where it starts.

It's, it lives in the cells of your body and then you can feel it. And you watch it, it doesn't turn into an unhappy me. It is simply an energy movement in you.

It doesn't turn into a story anymore, a self. And that really is liberation. You don't have to wait until there's no remnant of human pain left in you to become liberated.

Really liberation means not to identify with the pain anymore as myself. That's the illusion. That's not, that's the opposite of liberation, it's bondage.

But the fact that you live on this planet means that you very likely will carry a certain amount of pain in you as a human being on this planet at this time. And that's fine. That drives you in, very often it just becomes an important motivating factor for wanting freedom, for wanting to be free, especially in people whose pain body is very dense, very heavy.

They can't stand it anymore. The heaviness of self, of themselves, because they equate it with self, can't stand it anymore. Just as I couldn't stand, I couldn't live with myself because myself, a large part of what I thought I myself was, was painful self.

It was because my pain body was very dense and heavy until I couldn't live with it anymore. But I didn't know it was the pain body. All I knew was I can't live with myself

anymore.

So I was driven through suffering to the point of surrender where suddenly the sense of self disidentified from thought forms. It came about through a thought. It was the trigger.

The thought was, I can't live with myself. And the question that came after the thought was, if I cannot live with myself, what does that mean? Am I one or two?

Who am I? Who is the self? There must be two here.

That was a strange question. I couldn't answer the question, but to see that there were two there, I and the self that I couldn't live with brought about a separation between the thought forms of self, including the emotional energy field of pain body and the sense of identity of I am, which usually gets mixed up with thought forms. A separation happened.

And all that was left was I am, but no longer the self. And that was the peace that suddenly I found when I woke up in the morning. Because when there's only I am, there's deep peace in that I am.

All the things that I thought I was were gone. The structure of the self collapsed. It's rare that it collapses all at once.

For most of you, the demolishing process takes place gradually. Some buildings collapse all at once, but most buildings get demolished. You knock off something here, life does that.

A chunk goes there and another chunk goes there. And then finally, voluntarily you come here and that does the rest. So pain body is something that may still be there for a while.

But you can be free now simply by recognizing it as the pain body and by recognizing it, not making it into some personal self, the me. Then it renews itself every time when you believe this is me, my story, my unhappy story and you're totally immersed in your unhappiness with all the thought movements that go with it. There are certain collective aspects also to pain body.

There's a male pain body that has certain male elements, female pain body, the pain suffered by women over thousands of years. So there is a female aspect, there's a female collective pain body. I pointed out in the book through menstruation that often awakens just before.

The female pain body tends to awaken at that time. So that's very helpful to know because then you can be alert when you know it's about to happen, bring in the alertness and wait, actually can watch for it. The time is coming and you can actually say, okay, I'm going to see what the first sign of it is and what it feels like.

And then suddenly something comes, an emotion or physical feeling and it wants to become a thought very quickly and you catch it in its attempt to become a thought. Oh, and then you just watch it on the physical level, the vibration. The pain body then waits for, when you are there present with it, almost looking for it, it cannot fully come up then because you're watching.

It doesn't like to be looked at. Then it goes back. And then when you're looking somewhere else again, less conscious, after a few drinks or after watching television, you lose some consciousness and then the pain body will come in or you're tired after a heavy day's work and you lose alertness.

And if the pain body wants to come up then to feed, it will use that opportunity when you're not so conscious and quickly creep into your thoughts. And before you know it, your thoughts are completely aligned with the pain. So interesting to work with the pain body.

A time comes when pain body will, and this is the case with most of you, when it comes, instead of pulling you into unconsciousness as it usually does, when a certain level of consciousness has been reached and most of you have reached that, then when the pain body comes, you just become more alert. And from that place of alert presence, you can accept it. And the acceptance brings about the change, the transmutation.

It can't feed anymore on your mind. The entire pain body, at the root of it lies non-acceptance. So the only way beyond pain body is to bring acceptance to it because it is.

It is part of the isness of now. And suddenly you may sense a little bit of space around the pain that you feel, a little bit. Here's the turbulence of the pain.

And there's a little bit, I'm talking about something one can't really put into words. There's a little bit of space around it. There's the anger, let's say it's anger.

Anger, and it wants to become thought, but you watch it only on the level of the turbulence. And the watching and the accepting brings about a sense of spaciousness around it. And so the turbulence is moving still within the spaciousness, that's liberation.

And then the spaciousness deepens or you know it. Suddenly you notice how much spaciousness there actually is. And the pain body is no longer that huge.

Before it looked like some huge monster. And suddenly it's a little turbulence in vast spaciousness. Is that all?

Yeah. And that was so dreadful, yes. That made my life so miserable for so many years, yes.

And of course there are maybe other collective aspects to pain body. Some people's

personal pain body may also have their share of the pain body of your country because certain countries have pain bodies too, some more than others. Countries where there have been a lot of pain and turbulence in history have a heavier collective pain body.

So every person in that country, part of their pain body is the country's pain body. You carry that too. So in some countries, it's heavier than others.

The old European countries have a heavier pain body. The further east you go in Europe, the heavier it gets. Usually the collective of that.

But every country, there's so much past in these European countries, there's also a lot of pain body. And some more than others. The little countries, a little bit less.

The new world also has a pain body, not quite as deeply seated as the new, as the old. But in America, you have in the collective pain body, what was done to the native people, what was done to black people in North America. Those two great forms of suffering that were inflicted there have become part of the collective pain body of that countries, which means everybody has some of that inside.

But collective or not, it's the same. It's your responsibility to see it in yourself, to recognize it in yourself for what it is, to accept it as it is, to bring presence to it, which is all one. And so allow it to be, and then change happens.

The pain body is one deep no. If it could speak its essence, it would be continuously saying no, no, no. Because humans have lived in that state for thousands of years, the egoic no to life.

And more no can't free you of no. If you say, no, I don't want this pain body, more no, more pain. So you bring a gentle yes into the no.

It is as it is, that's the yes. That's the yes to now, yes. Compassion arises, compassion with human pain.

No matter whether it's in yourself or you see it in somebody else, compassion arises when you depersonalize the pain body. And don't mistake it for a person, neither in yourself nor in somebody else. If you mistake it for who you are in yourself, it becomes the unhappy story of me.

It energizes the already unhappy story of me and makes it miserably unhappy. Then it becomes a person. If you do it to somebody else, then you mistake the human pain.

That person that is in front of you may be at that time possessed by the pain body. It may be in his or her mind. And what pain bodies want from you is some reaction.

They will challenge you and somehow they will try, the pain body would say, it doesn't say it openly, but it would say, I'm unhappy and I want you to be as unhappy as I am.

And that's the challenge when you meet another pain body near you. He wants you to draw you into that.

And so compassion, first, you don't mistake it for who that person is. You realize this is human pain. It's a human condition.

Nobody there really, there's no self there. That's an illusion. And then there's no need to react.

You can actually allow it to be not only in yourself, you can also allow it to be in the other person. And that's compassion too. Gentle, realizing the human condition.

There it is. Nobody can be blamed for that. You can't blame yourself.

If pain body comes back in yourself, you could, the mind will try to do that. It will say, you see, you still have it after all these years. You might as well give up all that spiritual nonsense.

You see, you still have the same pain that you've had for years and you're not going to be free. You're deluding yourself. The pain body is speaking.

Go get drunk, do something. It can sound very convincing. Once it's using your mind, it can have very convincing arguments that how real, and this whole idea of pain body is just so much nonsense.

I mean, it's always, and you know how real this is. It's not the pain body, it's me. That's what the pain body says.

So it has all kinds of convincing arguments that will then, once it uses your mind, your thoughts will reflect what the pain body, they will be controlled by the pain body. You will think through the pain body. And so some human beings only experience the pain body once a month or so, and others more frequently, once a week, once every two days.

How long it stays to feed depends on how much presence there is in you. If presence is there, it passes through fairly quickly and it can't feed very much. If there's no presence, it can get lodged and stuck in your mind for several days.

And finally, it'll have enough and withdraw for a while. And some people walk around with a pain body that is active 90% of the time. That's more rare, but exist, they exist.

We probably all know one or two people who are almost continuously trapped in pain, emotional pain, old pain. And whatever they say to you, whatever they interpret is through the filter of their pain. So they inhabit, of course, a very unhappy universe.

So that's part of our transformation is to become free of pain body. To become free is not a future state to be achieved. It is recognizing it now, accepting it for what it is now,

bring a yes to that now, that is becoming free.

So you can only become free now. Free is not to mistake it any longer for who you are. You are the space.

You are not the object in space. And when pain body is there, that happens to be the object in your consciousness. But you are the much vaster consciousness in which it arises.

And you know yourself, you know that you are the much vaster consciousness because we don't want that to become some kind of belief in your head. I want you to believe that you are consciousness. How do I know that I'm right?

You know it by bringing a yes to it, an acceptance, a yes to now. Through that, you know that there is a deeper dimension in you, so to speak. It's no separation ultimately between inner and outer.

It's just a way of speaking. There is a deeper dimension in you that is beyond that pain, beyond anything that has a form, beyond content, and you know it through yes to now. That's the portal.

Anything that you accept takes you to that realization. It doesn't matter what it is. So anything takes you to peace if you accept it.

But whatever happens, you bring the yes to it, you welcome it, that condition takes you into deeper peace no matter what. That's the miracle of transformation. And here we are learning to accept the now even if it doesn't contain great disaster, even if it doesn't contain the pain body at this moment, we just accept whatever form the now takes, whatever form it takes is fine, could not be otherwise.

Welcome, that could be the mantra. Welcome, or yes, even shorter, the most powerful mantra, yes, that's all you need. Let's go into stillness.

If any questions arise, we may look at them this afternoon about pain body or whatever it may be. If nobody's waiting anymore, then I can start. There's a dynamic quality to that stillness.

Even when nothing is happening, it's awake. And then when things start happening, action may be necessary and yet the spaciousness is not lost even in the midst of action, having to deal with things and people. That's our challenge, to bring the spaciousness that we find here, glimpse here, find it, realize it into the world when we meet people.

And also when we sit still, not to fall from the state that is above thought, so to speak, to the state that is below thought, it can happen. You sit there and then suddenly a tiredness comes. And then you suddenly, before you know it, you're also in a state of

relative peace, but you're moving towards sleep.

And you may have met people in this world who have so little thought intelligence. As you know, thought is only a small aspect of intelligence, but there are people who have so little thought going on in their heads, they would be called maybe retarded. There's so little thought that they seem to exist in a state of continuous peace.

They may even laugh all the time. And perhaps they are compared to most humans. And they look at you and just laugh and they know they're not thinking anything.

Similar to a little baby. And very similar to a liberated person who is no longer judging you, forming mental images. He also laughs in a very similar way.

And so it can happen that some people, many people are longing to be free of the torture of their own minds. And that's why many people are reaching for some drug. And some of the drugs free you for a little while from the continuous torture of your own mind.

Even just drink a couple of stiff drinks, whiskey. And then suddenly you feel a little bit more, there's a more harmonious, there's the jagged, frantic mind just quiets down a little for a while. It can also happen that drink can awaken your pain body.

That's another matter. Especially in males, it can happen. But, and so there are other drugs that have a similar effect.

And people don't know why they feel so much better. They feel so much better because thinking subsides, is less active. And they don't know that they in most cases, moving towards the sleep state, the unconscious, they are falling below thought.

But that can be liberating. If the thought is torture, as it is for many people, their own minds, to even to fall below thought, at least you have a little bit of relief there with your daily whiskey. Or whatever drug it may be.

For that reason, I once tried LSD because people were telling me, oh, it's like meditation. It's like presence. And so I tried it once so that I can answer questions about it.

And what seemed to happen was an enormous heightening of sense perceptions. Now we talked about sense perceptions this weekend. How there is a portal there also when you look at something.

And there's presence, spaciousness, non-labeling. Perception then happens within that field of stillness. And for there needs to be alertness for that presence.

When you take that drug, what happened? I found the sensory perception became heightened. It's like turning up the volume on all senses.

So visual senses, everything, the colors are vitally alive. Every visual perception jumps at you almost. Auditory perceptions, as if somebody had literally turned the volume up.

And now you can hear even the slightest sound and it sounds loud. But smell becomes very acute. You could even smell a glass of water.

Touch becomes acute. It's almost too much even to touch the texture. And so what happens, you're being pushed into presence.

You can't move much away from now because the now is jumping at you from all through all the senses. So it can be liberating. I can see why sometimes people say it was a great thing to take that.

They had a glimpse suddenly into what it means not to live continuously in the future. They were actually being forced into the now. You can't get away if everything shouts at you, every sense, you're in the now.

So it can be a little glimpse for people of how wonderful it is not to be continuously away from now. And you haven't got much time for thinking when everything shouts at you, every sense is so acute. You haven't got time to think about it because you're simply perceiving.

Well, at least that's how I experienced it. But it was, it seemed the usual state, I prefer it. It's much more, it's more gentle and it's actually more awake.

It's more, you don't need, we could achieve the same effect if we went into a discotheque and this is perhaps why people are drawn to places like that where the music is almost deafening. It's amazing that they can come out of that after three hours undamaged. And of course that also, that shouts.

[Speaker 3] (5:48:14 - 5:48:34)

This morning you talked about the pain body and how it goes into your mind and creates thought. And I always assume that negative emotions were triggered by thoughts. So I'm not quite sure how it works now.

[Speaker 1] (5:48:34 - 5:53:00)

Okay, okay, thank you. The pain body originally developed in humans because of the arising of a mind-made sense of self which becomes suffering. So the egoic state that we have been talking about creates an enormous amount of suffering on this planet and humans create that suffering out of that state which is a state of great lack of fear, of unfulfillment which they need to, they look to fill that sense of lack through greed, through reinforcing their sense of self at the expense of other humans to use other humans to enhance their self, to accumulate possessions so that they have more to

identify with and take them away from others.

To adopt a position of rightness, we are right, our belief, our positions. And then you fight a war with others who have a different mental position in order to make them wrong. And so over thousands and thousands of years, more and more suffering is created out of this mental delusion ultimately of not knowing who you are.

In that sense, you're right that that comes, it's created by self-serving thoughts. Thoughts that are imbued with self. So that's the, that structure, structurally is never aligned with what is and that in itself is a state of suffering.

So the origin of the pain body lies in identifying with thought. And now what happens is that this accumulated energy of pain body becomes, works as a vicious circle where it energizes those thought structures that created it in the first place and feeds on them again. And that's called a vicious circle.

So the origin of it is in losing, for humanity lost itself in thought. And so it became suffering was the normal lot for most humans, still is. And that accumulated suffering became the pain body, which now energizes the thought structures that created it in the first place and still feeds on them.

So it's still thought is feeding the pain body. Thought created it in the first place. Now thought is maintaining it and feeding it.

And the pain body in turn energizes those thought structures and amplifies them. And that's called, therefore we call it a vicious circle where one feeds and energizes the other. And this is what, when you don't know that that's happening, you're trapped in that vicious circle, which one could say in Eastern terms, that's the wheel, an aspect of the wheel of karma.

Karma renews itself, action, reaction, which is pain body needs the reaction. Pain body is an aspect of karma. Karma meaning simply unconscious patterns, mental, emotional patterns that you identify with as yourself and those patterns renew themselves.

They create situations and reaction. You could never really come to the end of karma unless the power of the present moment is accessed. Otherwise you have a continuity of time.

Past becomes the future. The present is continuously obscured. The future becomes a continuation of the past.

So you're right, thought creates it, created it in the first place, but now there is a reciprocal movement, a vicious circle in human beings.

[Speaker 3] (5:53:11 - 5:53:48)

Okay, so this relates to something that happened before I came on the retreat. The day before, I was in a phone conversation with someone and I got very angry with them. I put down the phone.

And so there was a reaction, some pain and reaction to pain. And I'm still not clear about whether the other person actually could hurt me for real. Felt like he hurt me.

And I'm not sure now whether it's possible.

[Speaker 1] (5:53:49 - 5:53:54)

Okay, so the person said something to you?

[Speaker 3] (5:53:56 - 5:54:13)

Well, how it was, was that while I was listening, I had half of my consciousness in the body and half listening to the words and was coming this very strong feeling of pain. And then before I know it, I shouted at him on the phone.

[Speaker 1] (5:54:13 - 5:59:11)

Yes, okay. So this is something like that is the pain body reacting because the reaction very often is much stronger than the trigger. The trigger may just be a few words, but the pain is far greater often than you feel when the pain body comes up than would be warranted by the words that you hear.

The words must have touched the pain bodies. Some pain bodies are awakened by certain words that remind the person of some form of pain, perhaps in a childhood, for example, children who were abandoned by their parents. Even the slightest hint, this is only one of many possible examples.

And this has to do with your personal pain body, but the personal and the collective become mixed. So if a child was abandoned by their parents, the slightest hint when you're talking to somebody, a friend or a partner, the slightest hint of abandonment, even a person saying, I can't come, we can't meet tonight, I have a headache or I could trigger it when this pain body that accumulated so much pain when that abandonment happened, and it can serve as a trigger for enormous pain. And all the person said, I don't think I can make it tonight.

And it was far more than that. So that became the trigger and particularly happens when the pain body hasn't taken in much food for a while. So it's ready, actually ready to awaken.

And then the right trigger comes and then that influx of pain comes in. So it's gone now, the event is gone. But of course, all you can ever do with a pain body is to be there while it happens, to watch it, to feel the pain so that it doesn't use your mind.

In a little closer relationship, you may be able to say to the person, what you just said triggered enormous pain in me. It's strange, but I can feel it right now. If that person is open to it, you may not be able to say it in certain relationships that are more superficial.

But with some people, it is wonderful if you live with someone and you have an agreement that whenever you feel pain body, the other person seems to trigger it, that you immediately say what you just said brought up, I suddenly feel an enormous amount of pain. Then it's fine, then you can both say, oh, and you can bring acceptance to it. It doesn't become thought forms.

In this case, it's possible that after you put the phone down, the pain continued because it linked in with your thinking. Yes, so that is a few moments and it was gone because there's already an enormous amount of presence in you. If it hadn't been for that, it would have stayed for much longer, perhaps a few hours, even a day or two.

So it's watching it. And of course, nobody can really hurt you. What they can hurt is the mind form or they can touch the pain that still lives in you.

In that sense, they could hurt, but all they do is activate that which is already there. Ultimately, people do it to themselves. They hurt themselves.

So it is wonderful and many of you will be finding that pain body attacks become much more short-lived now because of the arising presence. Pain bodies don't stick around for that long anymore and hang in there for days as sometimes happens if presence is not yet there, feeding for days and days. So pain body is still feeding a little bit, but isn't getting that much food anymore.

Yeah. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:59:11 - 5:59:13)

I was reading pain.

[Speaker 4] (5:59:13 - 5:59:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:59:14 - 5:59:23)

It was very strong and then suddenly I saw the wind caressing the grass.

[Speaker 1] (5:59:23 - 5:59:26)

The wind caressing the grass. Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (5:59:27 - 5:59:32)

And the grass was green, so green.

[Speaker 4] (5:59:35 - 5:59:37)

And the pain was gone.

[Speaker 2] (5:59:39 - 5:59:45)

I even like a little poison. Yes. Because it was really strong.

[Speaker 1] (5:59:46 - 6:11:58)

That the open, that seeing of the grass was also thoughtless awareness. It was the arising, not it was the grass is beautiful, but there was more. There was the arising of spacious presence, space consciousness.

And suddenly the little personal self dissolved because there's such vast power there that used the insignificance of that personal event was so clear that it dissolved without any doing on your part. Nature can, any reference to nature can be very helpful just to look at nature and sometimes amazing to see when the pain body is occupying your body. Sometimes if it's strong, it is all over.

It can be in some places, in some cases, it's only in the stomach or solar plexus area as a throbbing or a heaviness here. In other cases, the pain body can occupy your entire body and actually feel, it feels like glue. And then if you sit next to a tree and maybe some grass or some flowers, and you see how free the tree is compared to this and you see the little area of pain is just here.

The pain is here. There's no, there's a blade of grass here and there's no pain there. And there's a flower here.

It exists in that beautiful state of just is. And so you can sometimes see in nature all around you, sanity. And the attention suddenly moves from the thoughts that were feeding the pain body from being trapped in thought, moves out of the prison of thought and becomes presence.

And then you can truly see nature suddenly. So you will encounter strange things, changes in the ways in which your pain bodies manifest now because of the arising presence. And very often you may find the pain body arises in its beginning stage and immediately you feel it.

You recognize it. You look at it, oh, and you feel that energy. And it stays for a little while and it's gone.

It couldn't feed. This is not, don't mistake this for suppressing it. There's no willpower involved.

There's no effort involved. You're not holding it down. You're not saying, I will not feel this pain body.

I am beyond it. I am the spiritual warrior, which you are, but not as a mind form. You are the spiritual warrior and the spiritual warrior has a sword, which I call the sword of presence.

And that's with that sword, you cut through time. Time is the continuity between past and future. And with a sword of presence, you cut through and suddenly it opens and there's the gap of now.

But that cutting through time is also the cutting through thought, the stream of thought. It's the same thing. When you cut through time, you cut through the stream of thought with that sword of now, of presence.

And you even cut through suffering. In the intensity of now, suffering can't survive. Some pain can survive for a little while, not long either.

Suffering cannot survive. Suffering is an unhappy me, with a story that cannot survive in now. So yes, you are a spiritual warrior, but don't develop the concept of me, I am the spiritual warrior.

I am more of a warrior than you or whatever. At any moment, the mind can come in with some new self-concept. It's looking, because now that it's losing its self-concepts, it's looking for the next one that is maybe a new one that it can get hold of.

And that is often the dilemma for people on the spiritual path. And suddenly you end up with a new self-image that was maybe stronger than the one that just went away. And you've gone all the way to the Buddhist monastery.

And before you know it, you become a very important person because you're now a Buddhist monk. It could happen, doesn't have to happen. Sometimes it works beautifully.

I've met some Buddhist monks who were like little children, free. And the younger monks sometimes are very dignified. They still carry, they have just adopted a new self-concept.

Now in the West, being a Buddhist monk isn't that rewarding for your sense of self because if you go to a big city with your robes, little children will shout Hare Krishna at you. But if you go to some Eastern countries, then you get a bit more feedback, respect. And some Buddhist monks I know travel first class on Thai airways because they're given the seats.

And so there's potential here for feeling an enhanced sense of self through being a Buddhist monk. Only potential, it doesn't have to happen. The whole structure is

designed to remove it.

And sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. The mind is cunning. It's waiting for something else to get hold of.

Teacher, the microphone, if you have a question in the back row, two people in the back. In the meantime, I'll say something. Teachers, people who become spiritual teachers, now the first thing to realize, if you believe that being a teacher is an identity, then you're trapped again.

It's nobody's identity to be a spiritual teacher. It's a temporary function. I am a teacher because the words come out of my mouth.

They come out of my mouth because there's an empty space. So they come. That makes me into a teacher.

Not in my identity, but the temporary function. The moment I walk out of here, what teacher is there? There's no teacher left.

It's just a person walking. The teaching is over. While it happens, I may be a teacher.

It's a function, not an identity. And so the challenge of every spiritual teacher, and some of you are already teachers in your own capacity, and many others of you are becoming spiritual teachers. How could you not?

You could not not teach as this new state of consciousness arises in you. You have to teach, not always in the same way, not necessarily this directly, but in one way or another, you will teach. And you may even teach directly.

And then the challenge is, again, even at that stage, the mind can come in and claim some new identity, especially if you get projections of other people. They project something onto you because they've sensed the power that comes through you. And they may equate that power with the form of the teacher.

But the form is only the hole in the flute. That's, the hole has also a form, it's round. Now this form is not round, it's a different shape, but it's the same.

And so if you equate the power that comes through with the form through which it comes, then you will project an image onto the teacher of specialness. And that's quite normal for the mind to do, to believe that this form is special, must be more special than me, for example, or I will also want to become as special as this one. And if a teacher is bombarded by projections of specialness for years, it's possible that he or she could succumb to the bombardment of specialness.

And one day it could interfere with the teaching and suddenly the teacher might say, I am the one. No greater teacher has ever been or will ever be than I. It becomes, a

distortion comes in.

Yes, of course, there is only one teacher ever, which comes through many forms. And then some form of specialness can creep in. It happens more easily to teachers who live only surrounded by devotees, disciples or followers, who don't do their own shopping anymore, who are totally sheltered and protected and don't meet anybody else anymore, except all these people who think this being is the one and then they themselves don't realize that the same power that is in you, that even prevents you from realizing it in yourself.

It's a great temptation for the teacher and it's stopping you from realizing that which you're projecting outward. This is not to say that you cannot use the power that comes through the form of the teacher as a temporary help to draw out that which is also in you. So to be able to use the help that is there in the temporary form of the teacher, this is good, but not to confuse the power and the form.

Some teachers free their students by dying. And at last, the form has dissolved and then some of their followers then suddenly realize, oh, I am the same. Okay, the microphone has reached.

[Speaker 2] (6:12:01 - 6:12:41)

Hi, I'm having more and more problem with planning, making planning and then having to follow up the things I plan. And to make an example, to come here was very difficult. I was happy where I was, very far, and in the last week I got very miserable and confused.

Why should I go so far? And on to India afterwards and the whole thing. And I got confused, for example, in that instance, what was, what is it to be, to surrender to the now?

And also, what is it that, beyond what I think is right or wrong, what is it that make me move finally? Okay, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:12:53 - 6:41:17)

When you are identified with a self, a mind-made self, a very common state is doubt. You're in doubt as to what to do. And some people remain in that state of doubt for a long time.

Sometimes it's doubt with one reference to just one particular situation. Where should I live? Should I go to this retreat or should I stay home?

And then you could sit and start to think about it. And it's agonizing sometimes to finally arrive at a decision. And even in the last moment, when you pick up the phone and says, yes, I'm going, the last doubt creeps in and is, do I really want to go?

And this is particularly, I mentioned this perhaps on the first day of the retreat, and every retreat, particularly retreats, and some people don't turn up and you don't know they're gone. And sometimes the organizer says they called up and they really wanted to come and then suddenly they're just gone or they cancel at the last moment. Sometimes it's a true emergency and they cannot make it.

But in other cases, here in this situation, something in you feels drawn here. That is the emerging presence. And something else in you doesn't want to be here.

And even during this time here, you may feel the two, something feels wonderful being here and there's an opening and something else, perhaps a mental commentary is saying, what are you doing here? Or has doubts whether you even should have come. He says, is this really working?

What's he talking about? Some kind of commentary. And you may shift between the two.

At every retreat, quite a few people are prevented from coming because of arising doubt. And that is the mind really not allowing you to come to the retreat. And it uses doubt as a means of confusing you.

And this is with that particular, in this particular situation. Now, what is the mode in other situations, normal situations, you have to make decisions. Should I go there or not?

What is the motivation for doing in the normal dysfunctional state? And the motivation for doing is some kind of need that through that situation, I can add something to me or some kind of fear. The doing comes out of the two movements of desire or fear.

They are the motivating factors in the normal state of consciousness. And they may also cancel each other out. You may want to go to meet, go to a dinner party, and you feel desire.

Maybe I will meet the one person who's going to make me happy there. So there's the desire movement. And then you're getting ready.

You're getting dressed. And then comes in the fear movement. Maybe I won't meet him or her.

And maybe I'll have to, these people will ask me questions that I can't answer. Maybe they know more than me. Maybe I'll feel inadequate there.

Maybe fear, and you can sometimes remain immobile through because fear and desire cancel each other out. In other cases, at some point, one predominates and then you're moved into you do it or you don't do it. You do it out of fear or you don't do it out of fear or you do it out of desire or you don't go there.

Desire can be very, very strong. Desire is often mistaken for willpower. You could have,

for example, a great desire for food, which is psychological.

The body's need for food is limited. The mind's need for food is only one aspect of the mind's need for more. And if it's not more in some other area, it will take in more food.

As long as it's more, it's a taking in of more. It's a psychological need, which is a very strong desire. And then some people go on a diet and they say, okay, and that's considered willpower.

They have the willpower to say no to the food and then they lose weight. But that's just a stronger desire. The stronger desire is to look attractive, to attract someone.

And that desire cancels out the desire for food. So there's a continuous movement and fluctuation of desire and fear, and you move between the two. Desire implies future, more in future.

So the doing is governed by needing to arrive at some point in the future or fearing that point in the future because the future is promising and threatening at the same time. It promises fulfillment. Perhaps I can complete myself, my story, my sense of self, can be finally myself through more future, or the future is a threat because it might kill you.

In one sense, it does because eventually you die. So the little self needs the future and fears the future, but future is the dominant force that governs your actions. Now, is it possible as the alignment with now arises, how do we live?

If we don't, if we no longer have the psychological need for future, how are we going to be motivated to take action? And that is an interesting question. What replaces desire as a motivating factor or fear as a motivating factor?

Because some people work extremely hard out of the fear of being insignificant, out of the fear of being nobody, they become millionaires. And for 30 years, all their energy came out of fear of not being good enough. And finally they build up an empire, big corporation is there.

They've made thousands of people unhappy, including themselves, but they've created money. Yes, and a lot of unhappiness. So at first, I didn't have a teacher.

The shift happened to me suddenly and it left me in a state of, one could say, an external observer would have said a state of confusion because suddenly I had no motivation anymore to do anything because the future had become unnecessary. The psychological future had become unnecessary. The present was so deeply fulfilling that I said, why do anything?

This is so beautiful. So I sat around for two years. Miraculously, I survived.

And gradually, doing happened by itself. I found myself getting up, seeing someone,

person coming to see me. Some doing arose that didn't have the future as a goal.

It arose out of the joy of doing what you're doing at this moment, not out of the psychological need of future. Of course, in everybody's life, some planning is necessary. Everybody had to plan to come here.

I had to put it in my diary a year before. It already said, retreat in Italy. So that was, of course, future came in, but that kind of future is very easy.

That you cannot avoid. It's called practical future. It's called clock time.

You cannot avoid that living here. You can live in a monastery and they also, they wake up at a particular time. Tomorrow morning, you are going to make breakfast, they say.

Okay, that's time. You can't get away from practical time when you live in this world. And so even I wear a watch.

Sometimes I hide it because so many people say to me, oh, I just, you wear a watch? Why is that? It doesn't make sense.

But it's helpful if you don't wear a watch, that's fine too, but it helps me to get here on time. Otherwise, I might turn up an hour late and I just drift in and say, well, there's no time. And some gurus do that in India.

They don't wear a watch. And there's one guru who could turn up at any time and often during the night he doesn't sleep. He could suddenly turn up for satsang at three in the morning.

And so the followers wait around. Nothing, no time has been specified. There's no structure.

He could turn up at any moment. That's fine too. But this would not be possible there.

This meeting would be difficult in that way. That's fine. Those structures work in that context.

And here there are other structures where time is used. Time that is used for practical planning is simply totally unproblematic. You pick up a phone and say, book a flight for next week, whatever it is.

But then the other time, the psychological time, the mental projection into some future moment, that is where the heaviness of future comes in. That's where time becomes a burden. That's where time becomes a desperate need for future.

So how do you live when the shift happens? Well, psychological time becomes unimportant. Practical time you can still use.

Now, when psychological time becomes unimportant, which is the great inner need for the next moment isn't there anymore, then action that arises out of you is no longer a means to an end. There may be an end, but the doing is always of greater importance than the arriving. You could write, find yourself writing a book.

Don't write a book too soon, just wait a little. But you could find yourself writing, suddenly the writing happens. And that can be a powerful movement.

In my case, it was a pen and notepad. In most people these days, it would be the computer. That can be a very powerful movement and very energizing.

When power flows into writing, an intense field of aliveness suddenly arises. That is deeply fulfilling in itself. Of course, the writing, you might say, I'm writing a book.

It may become a book at some future moment, some future time, it may be a book. But now the writing is, I'm giving my full attention to that. If the writing is a means to an end because I want to publish a book, I also want to be a successful writer.

I want to, that is a mind image, future, thought of future, where you see yourself as having achieved enhanced recognition through publishing a book. Then the writing is a means of getting you there. And you might put a lot of energy into it, but that energy comes out of, I must get there.

And you could even write a very clever book or book that contains a lot of thought, new thought structures, but not a truly alive book. The truly alive book that contains power comes out of the state of being aligned with now. And so the motivating factor for doing is no longer the pull towards future.

The motivating factor is the joy, aliveness, and fullness that is there in the doing. And that's, joy is an important part of that, power also. So that is the, that replaces desire and fear, which are future pulls for doing.

And any doing that comes out of that joy is also a doing, the doing that comes is no longer what it is that you need to do or that wants to be done through you, is not arrived at anymore through mental decision-making, which involves a lot of doubt. When you start thinking, should I write a book or should I not write a book? On the one hand, if I write a book, I might lose three years of my life, already an absurd thought, because you're already projecting that you're not going to enjoy yourself.

You might spend three years of your life and you're projecting future. I might lose three years where I could earn money and instead I'm going to write that book which might not even get published. On the other hand, if I don't risk that, I'll get stuck with my job.

So that requires a lot of thinking and you wake up in the middle of the night, on the one hand, on the other hand, but then what should I do? And then you can talk about it, think

about it, and years could pass before you have decided whether to write a book or not. Not uncommon.

This is just one example. Now, in the state of alignment, what it is that needs doing, or one could say that wants to be done through you, what it is emerges, one could almost say ready-made as a realization, this is what I have to do. It's spontaneous, the doing arises.

In some cases, it might mean leaving somewhere. We talked about that. You might be in your office and suddenly you get up and walk out.

No decision-making involved. Or the book, you might one day, you get a notepad and a pen and, oh, and after one page, you might know this is going to be a book because you can sense the power that's in there, but you didn't sit down and try to decide, am I going to write a book or not? Suddenly, the writing happens through you.

And so spontaneity, also intuitive realizations, come out of the state of alignment with now. So that replaces the old way of doing, which is very problematic. And you know how problematic it can be, this yes, no, but, if, what if, and thought and thought and thought.

Okay, there's another question. Oh, one more question in the back and then the microphone will travel to you. Excuse me, but what happens if...

Yes. No, that's an interesting thought. This really isn't working.

Now, if you recognize that as a thought, then you don't need to believe in that thought completely, because the mind will throw up all kinds of thoughts of a similar nature that are telling you that it's pointless, it's not working. Or now, say yes to now, it says, no, not now. I will practice again tomorrow.

The mind says, this is not the right moment. I have too much on my mind now. It just won't work.

The mind has these thoughts and they will come up in you. If you don't recognize them as thoughts, then you're identified with the thought and then you act on it. And each time the thought will say, give up, let, don't even, don't.

You have too much, too many problems to deal with. You just can't get into all that stuff about portals and all that, just think about your problems. That's more important.

And when a thought like that comes, you see the thought. And then you say, oh, there goes another one of those thoughts, or you simply, you watch that. And that's already presence arising.

The moment you even notice a thought as a thought, the simple fact of noticing that here's a thought, there's already the dimension that is beyond thought, presence,

arising, because it's through presence that you can notice the thought. So the very thought that is noticed, the thought that says, I can't remember what that thought, that there's no point, you might as well give up, or whatever the thought says, there's no point in all this. And as this thought is noticed, the seeing of it as a thought is the arising presence.

In other words, as you see that thought, there is a space around the thought and that is the witnessing presence. And then once you recognize that, the thoughts in themselves are no longer a problem because you're no longer completely identified, or one could say, you don't believe in every thought as if it were some truth. It is the mind attempting to stay in control.

It's only an energy movement, it has a momentum. And then comes the next thought that might say, whatever, I can't be present now. There's just too much going, so many disturbing things going on around me.

Can't be present now, how could you be? It's impossible to be present here, not in this place. And then you watch that thought and you're present.

Yes, how would that look in practice? For example, what you're using the portal of? Well, you're walking down the door, you're seeing things, you can see them.

Yes. And you're thinking, I must stop thinking. I'm obsessed about stop thinking, stop thinking, and the stop thinking becomes the thinking.

Yes, yes, yes, that's a good point. Now, you may notice, I would never say stop thinking, because that would be like saying, don't think of a green elephant or pink, pink elephant. There is the possibility that the state of thoughtless awareness may arise here through one of the portals.

So if you are looking at something, you may be looking at a tree, and then it's possible that thoughts arise that either have nothing to do with what you're looking at, or thoughts arise that are commenting on what you are looking at, or thoughts arise that are saying, I'm looking at this tree, and I'm still thinking, but I shouldn't be thinking. It doesn't matter what kind of thought arises, even the thought that says, you see, you're still thinking, and you should be not thinking. No matter what the thought says, it's enough to recognize thought as thought, because that also is a portal.

And now at this moment, your mind is saying that this is not possible, which is another thought. So that thought loses its power to draw you in completely, to draw all your attention in completely. So here goes another thought.

You could say that, which is a thought also, but that can free you from taking the thoughts so seriously or regarding them as obstacles, because when you regard thought as an obstacle that you need to overcome, you energize the thoughts. What happens

when you use a portal like the inner body? Can you feel the aliveness in your body?

No. Can you feel the aliveness in your right hand? No, no.

If you closed your eyes, close your eyes, hold your right hand like this without opening your hand, without opening your eyes, without moving your hand, without touching anything, you're not looking, you're not touching anything, you're not moving your hand. Can you know whether your right hand is still there or not? How can you know whether it's still there directly?

Not as a memory. Okay. And I haven't yet met anybody who cannot feel a little bit of energy where there is a right hand.

And you also, there's some energy there. It may not be much, yes. That is entering the inner body.

And if you just hold attention there for a while, at least it's not in the head, it's there. Some thoughts may still happen, dance on the surface, but you've taken attention away from thoughts and it's there now. If you can feel one hand, you can feel other parts of the body.

You can feel the other hand. It's that you've entered the body. Once you've entered it, other parts you will also feel.

It comes by itself. So that may be certain portals work better for certain people. That's why there are more than one portal.

They all take you to the same place. And that's why I recommend different portals so that you can find the one that works best for you. It may well be that the one that you said you couldn't feel could well be the best portal for you.

And so if you can feel that, that's all that's needed. Thought loses its importance when you inhabit the inner body and it becomes an anchor for presence. So I would say the one that you haven't tried is the best one for you.

And eventually all the portals take you to the same place. If you end up in the same place, one portal goes that way, one goes that way, goes that way, they all end up there. So which one you use doesn't matter.

The one that works best for you. And for some it's sense perception, for some it's listening to silence, for some it's the inner body, for some it's to say, I allow this moment to be as it is. They all become portals that take you to the same place.

So it works. And thoughts may still come in occasionally, which might say, I can't be in the body now, there's too much going on. And then you just see the thought and you feel your right hand.

Oh, we may need to, we have clock time here. Okay.

[Speaker 4] (6:41:19 - 6:42:06)

I'm sorry. Okay, I guess I'm looking for perhaps a humorous picture or a hint. Many of my, much of my time is just passing by without being present.

And you said before, when presence arrives from the formless, that it's nothing that we do. So it's some kind of need from there or grace or whatever. On the other hand, I found being in intense situations, being faced with difficulties or duty, it works quite often.

But then there are many times when I'm just busy with little things or dealing with people, I'm just unconscious. Is it just something I have to wait for then or just have to be patient? There's nothing I can do, so to speak.

[Speaker 1] (6:42:07 - 7:28:02)

That is the challenge that everybody faces. That as presence arises, the arising presence will be challenged by the human mind. Both from within you, we could call that your mind.

Ultimately, the human mind is the human mind. But let's just call it your mind. It will be challenged by your mind.

In cooperation with your pain body, the arising presence will also be challenged by other human minds, people around you, situations around you, because these structures, the human-made structures of our world, social, economic, political, work structures, they are all made by the unenlightened human mind, the egoic mind. So work situations, the way you think, the way people do things, all those pre-existing structures are created by the madness, ultimately. So you are moving in external structures created by the human mind, and you are meeting in those mind structures with other human minds.

For example, if you're a teacher, many schools these days are quite mad places. And to be a teacher is extremely stressful. Even hospitals, if you're a nurse or a doctor, again, hospitals, many hospitals are quite mad places.

Potentially, they could be great places of healing or regeneration, but there are people running around. And it's a miracle that healing still happens, and it happens sometimes despite the mind. Some of it comes through the nurses that still bring some presence without knowing it, or perhaps nurses have been coming here too, and doctors.

So they bring something to balance the madness that is there. So almost any situation that you move into, you will still encounter the agitated human mind coming at you, if not from within you, from without. And so that's the great challenge, whether you teach at a school or work in a hospital or work in a corporation or work for social services,

helping people, and everybody's unhappy, and everybody's complaining, and you go to committee meetings, and there's continuous arguments and position-taking and disagreement, all those things that make up the egoic mind.

And your challenge is to bring presence to that situation. But the human mind will want to draw you in, and its pull can be quite strong. "'Come and join us in our madness,' it says."

And the pull is there. And the pain body can be very active too in those situations. And the pain body is saying, "'Come, be as unhappy as we are.'" And so this is how presence deepens. It's through the challenges of living in this world that presence deepens. And then one day you find yourself being in the same conflict situation and simply being there as a spacious presence, not a reactive entity. And you watch what people are saying.

You look, watch. And not thinking they should be more sane, they should behave differently, they shouldn't be so unconscious and selfish and greedy and power-hungry. What you're looking at is simply the human condition.

Compassion comes, but really there's spacious presence, but it needs to be intense. And then nothing else is needed but to hold the non-reactive space of presence, which of course doesn't involve effort. There's an intensity to it.

There is even a fierceness to it. You cannot explain through words the qualities of presence. In one sense, one can say it has no qualities because it has all qualities, but there is a fierceness to presence, particularly in challenging situations.

Remember the sword, what I call the sword of presence, the fierceness that you can see when you look at old paintings of Zen masters. There is a look that is almost frightening in its fierceness with bulging eyes. They are challenging, very challenging to encounter.

There. That's the fierce aspect of presence. Underneath it, there's a softness, a gentleness.

And sometimes the fierceness is necessary, or it is just an intensity of, the fierceness is not fighting anything, it's just there. And that, any situation that you bring that into, hang on to your body if necessary, the inner body while you're there, and to be deeply, really rooted here. And then you watch.

And that is enough to change the situation. Not that you even want to change the situation, then you're making, creating some future again. The presence that arises is not a means towards changing the situation.

You give up the desire or the need to change the situation. Because that also is a need for something to be different from the way it is. It's a psychological need for future.

So in any situation that is full of conflict, full of unhappiness, full of problems, even also healing situations where a person comes to you for advice or healing, not believing that you need to change the situation. You need to improve the situation. And then you make presence into a means to an end, and it's not presence anymore.

You're trying to achieve something through being present. Presence is enough in itself. And whatever is needed to change the situation comes out of presence without prior intention that says, this is what I'm going to do in this situation.

And you find yourself, the doing happens. And sometimes no doing happens, and something changes in the energy field around you. Something changes around the conference table.

Something changes in the family where they're having dinner in the kitchen at the table, and everybody is shouting, and suddenly the mother or the father holds presence, and the shift comes. Presence. Invariably, things change when you no longer demand, because that is an important part of the arising presence, you no longer demand that this situation should be different because it isn't.

It is as it is. And only through the recognition of is as is does presence arise. And that is the miracle.

When the need for it to be different goes, then it changes. Because presence always means yes. And that yes will have to very often be a yes to whatever stage humans are at in their present evolution, which is called extreme dysfunction.

But it's not that you're saying, I say yes to extreme dysfunction. No, that's a mental stuff again. There's simply a yes to what is.

You're not condemning any of these people that are participating in the drama and thinking they should know better. They should be enlightened. They shouldn't be so unconscious.

They shouldn't be like that, and like that, and like that. They are as they are, and there's nothing personal to it. It is simply a manifestation of human consciousness or unconsciousness.

So let's simply be there as the space in which it happens. Then healing happens, transformation happens. Sometimes words come out of your mouth.

You contribute something to the situation, but the words that come have a different energy quality to them than before. They have a power. You may not say anything.

Somebody else may suddenly wake up and say something that is for the first time something deep and true that is not designed to create more conflict. And so that's when

you realize for the first time the most agitated people very often become, wake up when you are there as spacious presence. And this happened to me at first.

I was astonished when it happened several times when agitated people came to me and said, you must do something about this. This needs to be done. Look at these papers.

This is a dreadful problem. This is fear. Yes, just presence.

And with one person, she dropped, suddenly dropped all her papers and said, this isn't important, is it? And then she said, there's only love, isn't there? Yes.

Nothing was needed. No doing was necessary. Just that.

Beautiful. Well, the clock says 6.20. It's now, of course. Several people have given me watches that have, wherever the numbers are, it says now, now, now.

So, and they're always accurate. Let's enter stillness. It seems that time moves on.

Every experience. First, it's only a thought form, retreat in Italy. For some people, it never became a reality.

It remained a thought form. They never turned up. And they're still thinking, should I have gone?

And some are beating themselves up. I didn't go. I missed it again.

I should have got this. I had booked and then I canceled. How stupid.

How stupid. So it remained a thought form, future. For others, those who are here, the thought form seemed to get closer.

Future thought, thought form is future is a thought form. And then it seemed to get closer. It didn't get closer, it's just a perspective.

And then suddenly, it opens up. It's the now. It actually is, it's here.

And then. And then it's a thought form again. A memory, supported perhaps by some photos, or even moving images on the screen.

See a video, who knows, but it's gone. And so it seems the express train of time never really stops. And you see the landscape, it's coming.

So that's every experience fleeting. And you may find the same when you reach the end of this lifetime. A collection of experiences that went by quickly and then your entire life, was that it?

Maybe it was a dream. The dream-like quality, we talked about it, of something that has

moved into past. So time, we seem to be trapped in it.

And now time is dragging us along. We can't stay here. Time is dragging us away from here.

No, I want to stay here. But that whole idea of time is only thought, both future and past. And although the experience of this gathering is fleeting and comes to an end, and seems like whenever any experience comes to an end, it's a little death, a little bit dying.

You die many times whenever something ends. It's not without reason that in many languages, the word for goodbye includes the affirmation that we are going to meet again to make that death a little easier. Because there seems to be something missing when you say goodbye.

And not many people leave it like that, although in English, that word itself doesn't have the notion that it's. Usually in English, you then add, see you, see you soon, see you next year, see you at the next retreat. Other languages, you don't have to add that because *au revoir*, *auf wiedersehen*, and so on, they already have that idea built in, see you again, which means goodbye.

So it makes the death a little easier. And there's the promise of future, another event in the future, a rebirth. We can have a similar experience again.

But this is not what I'm promising you here. I'm not saying, don't worry, we're going to have another retreat. We may, but when that comes, it'll be the same as this, a thought form, it's here and it's gone.

And then there we are again. And then, so the experience comes to an end, but as an experience, this wasn't a great thing anyway. As an experience, it could have been much more exciting with all kinds of very exciting things happening.

Well, maybe Paul, one or two of you, something exciting did happen, I won't inquire. But probably for most, as an experience, there wasn't that much in it, that much, not that much happening, just beautiful, but not that much happening in it. And that wasn't the purpose of this gathering to fill it up with some kind of content.

Some content is inevitable, the words are content, the sense perceptions are content, but as content goes, you've probably had more exciting experiences where there was more content. So on the level of content, this was okay. And that is the experience, the content of it, the form that it takes ends.

But the real reason for us meeting here was to point to something else, to that which is beyond content. Both content, the external content of your life, which we could call the life situation, and beyond the inner content of your life, thought forms, emotional forms, the stream of thinking, the emotional fluctuations, including the pain body, to see that

which is before content and after content arise, after it comes and goes. It's born and dies.

This experience was born and then it dies. Now it's dying. That's beautiful too.

So the entire gathering was pointing to another dimension that is even beyond an experience as such, because experience implies that it comes and goes. It has a beginning and an end. And it exists in time, beginning, end.

And then you see that anything to do with content, external or internal, has a certain lifespan. It's fleeting. Everything.

And because it's so fleeting, it has a dreamlike quality. I mean, there's something in Shakespeare somewhere, we are the stuff dreams are made of, or something like that, a dreamlike quality to one's life, because of the fleetingness of everything. And so we see that which already, of course, the Buddha pointed to as one of the characteristics of existence is impermanence.

And to see that in a strange way is already a kind of liberation. Even just to recognize how impermanent all experiences are, how can you recognize it? If everything were of the same color in this world, yellow or green, every object, whatever you look upon, then obviously that color wouldn't exist because you have nothing to differentiate it from.

If everything were yellow, there would be no yellow. You wouldn't recognize yellow because everything is yellow. If everything were impermanent, one could say perhaps, even the recognition of impermanence would not be possible.

To see it means that there is something that is beyond the fleetingness of all phenomena. And when you see how fleeting it is, that seeing arises out of the unconditioned, timeless consciousness, presence, space consciousness. From there, you see the world of form.

It is not judged. You take no perspective, position, standpoint, reaction. It's simply seen.

The moment it becomes a judgment and say, isn't it sad? We live in this dreadful place where everything is turning to ashes. It's already turning to ashes.

Even at this moment, every object, every body, we just don't see it right there. But if we saw a speeded up version of this room, 2000 years compressed into one minute, everything would be turning to ashes. And that would be an amazing spiritual realization if you could see here, let's imagine film is speeding up, let's say 4,000 years, which is very little on a planetary or cosmic scale, 4,000 years here, nobody's interfering with what's happening, compressed into one minute, and then you see it on a film.

And then you would see, first of all, the bodies sitting here. They would shrink, get old

and wrinkled and suddenly dissolve. The flesh melts, bones remain for a little while and they also crumble.

And then the wood would go. And even metal would get rusty and then dissolve. And then after that minute, just maybe a little bit of dust and then a gust of wind comes and it's all gone in one minute.

And you're watching. That watching in which no judgment arises, a simple seeing is the witnessing presence. Is the space in which all phenomena come and go.

And that is the essential nature of yourself. When you, it looks from an external viewpoint as if you were dragged away from here by time. You can't get out of time, so this comes to an end, you have to leave.

But really when you go here, all that happens is the space of now, which is the space of aware presence, which is the space consciousness. All that happens is that some other forms, some other experiences come into, appear in the space of now, your field of awareness. For example, a train appears.

The body moves. Then it sits on the train and goes. And it goes.

Landscape. And then maybe an airport appears. And then the vision of the inside of an airplane appears.

And then another airport appears. Space. And there remains, things appear and disappear in the field of awareness.

That's all. Now it has, one thinks of that as I am going there and then I'm going there. Ultimately, on a deeper level, you're not going anywhere.

You're not going anywhere. The scenery changes. The hologram changes.

The holodeck, for Star Trek enthusiasts. It's like forms appear for a moment. And then if even at any moment you could close your eyes and then the visual dimension disappears except the memory traces.

You could sit on an airplane, close your eyes. Then a huge amount of content disappears unless it's replaced immediately by thought. You close your eyes and then there's just a dark space.

And then there's auditory perceptions left. If they also disappeared, there would be some touch, but let's say that goes too. Then simply there's a deep, vast space.

There's something there and yet nothing there. You, in your essence, would be there, the I am-ness. And so it's that to see that the changing phenomena, they happen within an unchanging space.

And most humans are totally unaware of the unchanging space which I sometimes call, because then people can, it's a useful perspective, which I sometimes call the space of now. People are unaware of the space of now. All they know is the content of now, what happens.

Because the content changes all the time, people believe that every day consists of many nows, many moments, every hour seems to consist of many moments. If you look more deeply, you realize there are no many moments. Your life consists of the one unchanging now moment.

It is never not the now, this. So it's an illusion to think that my life consists of many moments, because I'm mistaking the form that the now takes for the essence, the space of now. That's why it seems that there are many moments in one's life, whereas there's only one moment.

That also brings out the delusion of time, ultimately delusion, which is connected with the workings of your thought processes. And there it has its place, but you don't need a lot of philosophical ability, first of all, to see, perhaps even a 10-year-old, maybe a 10-year-old could see it more clearly than an adult who is trying to figure out what this means. There's nothing much to figure out except to see that it's always now, this is self-evident, that nothing ever happens, nothing ever is experienced, felt, even thought.

You can think about the future, but you have to be thinking it now. You cannot do anything, you can't, life and now, you and now are inseparable, it always is this. Then the form of now, of course, changes.

Here we have this form, this room, a body sitting here, words coming out of the mouth, ears perceiving the words, the space of this room, the bodies filling this room. The space of this room, when you become aware of that, that already takes you beyond identification with content. But yet the content is this, and in a few hours, it may be something totally different.

The space of now will have different content to it, as I just described, comes, goes. So usually all that people know and are aware of and are identified with is the content of now. And as such, it never lasts very long.

Like this experience, the content is this, the external form of our retreat coming to an end. The content is about to disappear from the field of now, all the forms. Then there may be left mental content, memories of this event, they could linger for longer, but it's no longer the actual reality.

But even those things, you can only think in the field of now, those thoughts come up in the field of now. It is possible that while you're sitting on an aeroplane, the field, the space of now may be filled primarily with memories of this event, rather than the sense

perceptions of that moment. So sense perceptions and thoughts and emotions fill up the space of now.

And most people, that's people's lives. That's what people see as my life. It's the content of my life.

And there's something not that satisfying about it because of the short-lived nature of all those content things. And I called that at the beginning of our retreat, I used the expression object consciousness for that, to be only conscious of content, not conscious of space in which it happens. In other words, to be only conscious of the content of now, but not of the now, which is the space.

Space consciousness arises when there is a sudden awareness of this, the underlying field, which defies, which cannot be really put into words because every word is content again. So we are using words and thoughts to point to something that cannot possibly be understood through words or thoughts. So one could say it's an impossibility for us to understand what these words point to.

And the reason why we are here is not to understand that, don't even try. The words, the purpose of the words is simply to point there. So I can say there is that which happens and there's that which enables it to happen, the space.

Sometimes described as stillness, but no word is totally adequate. And I suggest to you, I've been suggesting this, to know for yourself this such, so intangible thing that people spend a lifetime in a Zen monastery trying to get it and often don't. But now it's getting easier.

That, I suggested that little portals appear in your life through which that dimension can be realized. One is silence because it's the absence of content. To acknowledge the absence of content, that which corresponds to that inside you can acknowledge that nothing else.

Silence, no content. So you listen to it, you notice it. And suddenly the noticing is the arising of no content in your mind until a thought comes in that says, oh, it's very silent.

That may come in after three seconds. That's okay. It may come in after two seconds.

It's okay. But there were two seconds of no content. The first moment of listening to the silence, which is listening to nothing.

And that is not significant from the point of view of content, but it is deeply significant because something is arising, a dimension of consciousness that is unconditioned, that in which there is nothing is born or dies because there's no form in it. The formless, unconditioned dimension that is the essence of who you are. And that in such a seemingly insignificant thing as noticing silence, if only for a few seconds, two or three

seconds, that is arising.

It's then immediately perhaps covered up again by content because a thought comes in that says, why can't you listen to it for longer? And then perhaps again, the attention goes and there's a listening again. And during that moment of listening, there's a little space in which there's not a single thought because you cannot listen to silence through thought.

Thought is mental noise. Thought knows nothing of silence. It is unaware of silence.

To even have an awareness of silence as a dimension, even though there may be a few noises as an underlying dimension, which is always there somewhere, the dimension of silence is there, here very much so, to even be aware that silence exists requires you to be without thought for an instant. And in many cases, it is only an opening. And that is the same opening that I suggested to you when you first look at something, sense perception, it comes into your field of vision.

It arises in the space of now. When you first look at something, in that first perception, there is a spaciousness in which you have not had time yet to formulate a thought about it, to call it something, to label it. So when I turn my head and look at this for the first second or two, there is simply the looking.

It's actually longer than a second or two. And if you could truly see that, you'd be amazed. You'd be amazed.

Truly see means stay with the spaciousness in which the labels don't arise, that comes. Don't demand that as I should be seeing it without. It's enough to notice that in the first moment the perception arises in a field of stillness.

That's all. That field of stillness most people are totally unaware of as a deeper dimension within themselves. Words are limited.

It's within and without. Let's call it within. As a deeper dimension within themselves, unaware of that.

So unaware of space consciousness. And so the liberation is the liberation from the world of form, the world of content. And seeking yourself there somewhere in some content, mental form of me, it's the same.

So just capturing, noticing the moment of stillness that is there. When you first look, it doesn't have to be nature. It could be anything.

Nature has a lot of stillness already in there. Some man-made things have a nervousness built into them. But nevertheless, in the first moment there's always the clear perception.

And when you notice it, it is possible that it may be there for longer, the space. If not, it doesn't matter. Yes, please.

No, no.

[Speaker 2] (7:28:08 - 7:28:35)

The more I try to bring the space into my life, I've noticed that I face a lot of fear. I perceive layers of my personality and I can get a small distance and I get closer and closer and there is this huge fear. And I wish if you could talk about this fear.

I feel that I want something wonderful to happen to me, but for this to happen, I cannot be there.

[Speaker 4] (7:28:35 - 7:28:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (7:28:36 - 7:28:39)

And there is the fear of death or whatever.

[Speaker 1] (7:28:39 - 8:15:05)

Yes, thank you. That's an important point. And you are not the only one who feels that.

And the fear is the fear of the mind-made entity, the self. Because in that, it seems to disappear. And it's, no, it doesn't want to disappear.

And so what do you do with the fear? All you can do is also notice it as a feeling, a movement. Nothing is needed beyond noticing it in the same way that you notice a sense perception and look on it, feel it.

Otherwise, the fear becomes a reaction and you withdraw and run back into identification with thinking, the familiar place. It feels so familiar. So then the fear pushes you.

When you touch the space consciousness, sometimes it happens that fear arises. And then you touch it again. And if you don't know that this is a very natural reaction, then the fear, you identify with the fear.

You become the fearful entity that then withdraws again into the normal state of the. So to notice the fear is there brings about a freedom so that the fear is not totally possessing you. You're not totally identified with the movement of fear.

You can see the fear in your energy field and don't have to do anything. You allow that. And then you can look again at something when the same thing that brought the fear,

there is a gentleness.

When you allow the fear, there's a gentleness around it because so you're using the other portal now with the fear, which is allowing it to be. Then the fear itself is turned into a portal. First, it seems to prevent you from getting there.

But if you then apply the portal of allowing it what is to be, it is, then the fear itself becomes a portal again. So first there was the portal of perception, clear perception, which brought about fear or listening to the silence, which brought about fear. Then you notice the fear and allow it.

The allowing is best expressed in the gesture that I would describe as this, where you almost, you hold it in a spaciousness, which is also one could say that gesture and that particular portal very much connected with a female principle of embracing. That's why that's, you see sometimes with Mary statues, the arms like that, but that is the female principle. There's enormous power in that holding, embracing, receptivity, and there's a gentleness there.

So when you allow something, including fear, there is that an inner holding it within this larger spaciousness. And it might even help for a little while to actually hold your arms like that. And then, because you can almost feel the space around it, and then whatever it is that you allow to be, will turn into the portal.

The worst things will turn into a portal, but the worse they get, the deeper the yes would have to be. And the deeper the allowing. And so see how everything that looks like an obstacle in your life, an obstacle to enlightenment, an obstacle to whatever, can easily be turned into an opening, simply through non-resistance.

And then every situation, even if it looks from a conventional mental viewpoint, even if it looks dreadful, very bad indeed, if you allow that which looks dreadful and very bad indeed, the strange thing is that every situation, it's not just on the inner level that the shift happens, that the portal opens. The situation itself is turned from good to bad. It's the transmutation of good to bad.

It's not, there's a famous story. Unfortunately, I don't remember the details of it. There are different versions.

When a poor farmer, a horse comes to him, a wild horse, and all the people in the village come to him and say, aren't you lucky? You're so lucky that this horse, you have a horse now. And the farmer says, well, maybe, maybe so.

And then the next day, the horse, I think, leaves him again, and they all come, oh, you've lost the horse, you're so unlucky. First you had it, just maybe, maybe. And then the horse comes back the next day with five other horses, and they come back and says, maybe.

Then the farmer's son rides on the wild horse, and then he's thrown off and breaks his leg, and the villagers come and say, oh, poor man. You know, he cannot help you with the harvest. And the farmer says, perhaps, maybe.

The next day, the army comes to seek conscripts for the next war, and the son can't go with them, and they all get killed, of course. So the villagers come and say, aren't you lucky? You've kept your son because he has a broken leg.

Okay, every event, he doesn't resist anything, and every seemingly bad event turns into good again. There are quite a few people in this room who have experienced bad events that they would never have chosen if somebody said, do you want this to happen to you? You would just say, no, but it happened.

And at some point, surrender happened, if not complete, substantial surrender happened. And then you see that which you never wanted was actually the best possible thing to happen for you. And it's a strange realization that whatever happens to you, when you align yourself with it, will turn out to be the best possible thing for you.

The universe is not mad. Only you are mad. It's nothing personal.

And of course, your madness is part of the universe too. It's a little game. So to see that whatever happens through the yes, turns around.

It's not only that you become free internally, and a dimension opens up that is beyond the form that this moment takes. Even on the level of form, a shift happens and it turns around. And that's an amazing thing to realize.

The similar story, which I have told a few times, the Zen master who was accused by a 17-year-old girl who was pregnant of being the father in a town in Japan. And the parents came to him and said, she has just told us she's going to have a, she's given birth to this baby and she has just confessed to us that you are the father. When she came to see you nine months ago, it happened.

She had a session with you and you... And all over the town, they gossip started and they all said how dreadful he could have done such a thing. But when they came to him, the parents and told him about it, all he said was, is that so, in Japanese?

I don't know what the Japanese... It may be something like, ah, so, or something like that. So the parents come and say, here, you have, we don't want this baby, it's your baby, you look after it.

First they say, you are the father and he didn't deny it. He said, oh. And then they said, here, you have the baby, you look after it, we don't want it.

Is that so? Ah, so. And then they left and he started looking after the baby, feeding it,

buying food.

Nobody came to see him anymore because he had lost his reputation. But because he didn't live through a conceptualized sense of self, all that mattered to him was what this moment required. This moment, there was this baby.

So he was feeding the baby. Without the conceptualized sense of self, the drama was in all the other people. They talked about it for months and months.

The drama was not in him. There was only this moment and he cared for the baby. A year later, the girl confessed that the master wasn't the father, but the boy next door.

So the parents came running to the Zen master and said, she's just told us that you are not the father. And he said, ah, so. And so, we are terribly sorry we made a mistake.

And can we have the baby back now, please? We want the baby now. Is that so?

Okay, here it is. That situation, which is potentially a dreadful thing for the Zen master, it turned into good, only good. The baby was brought up the first year of his or her life by a Zen master.

That's a good start in life. And this is the story symbolizes the state of non, it's an extreme version of non-resistance to what is. It wouldn't have to be literally like that.

You could say, you could have said, no, I'm not the father. But if you believe that I'm the father, what can I do? Could say that also.

This is an extreme form of being aligned totally with now, never resisting. And the good that comes out of a seemingly bad event through alignment, inner alignment with it. So it describes the state of not resisting the isness of now.

Jesus has an even more extreme example. And again, it's a symbol. Turning the other cheek means simply complete non-reaction.

It's not necessarily, you don't have to take it literally. It's inner non-reaction, inner non-reaction. Because usually somebody hitting you on the cheek would immediately produce a strong reaction.

Non-reaction. So he's not giving any prescription for external conduct. It's pointing to an inner state of being aligned.

Non-reaction. So that's, and all evil turns into good through that. The situation turns around.

You have to try it out in your life. But one could say that is only a byproduct of something deeper. The fact that the external situation also turns around is a byproduct of

something deeper.

At the deepest level, what matters is the inner, the arising of that depth, that space. That spaciousness within yourself, to know that through non-resistance. And then there's the event, there's, and yet the allowing, the space that comes when you allow.

And so you become free of depending on content of your life. As a byproduct of that, a little irony of the universe, when internally you become free of the content of your life needing to be in one particular way to satisfy you, you become free of that need for your life situation to be in a particular way to satisfy you, which most people have that great need. You become free of that because knowing the depths of space consciousness is the most satisfying of all.

That is the only satisfying state. So then the need for content to be in a particular way isn't there. And the irony of the universe is such that when you don't need for the content of your life to be in a particular way, it turns into, the tendency is for content to turn into good, not without limitations ever, but it becomes harmonious because you're aligned with the totality.

So a harmonious flow comes into your life, which often means it also improves the content as a byproduct, precisely at the point when you don't need it anymore as a desperate inner need. So people have demands, they demand that the world should make them happy. It doesn't.

It's not in the nature of the world to make you happy. You can try for a while. One could say the world is here to make you conscious, not to make you happy.

And then when you're conscious, happiness is there or something deeper than happiness is there, a joy that has a depth to it that is deeper than happiness, happy, unhappy, happy, unhappy, something deeper is there. So not to see the ultimate non-satisfactory nature of content, when you see that, it gets better because you don't need it anymore. So it's strange.

And many people realize in their own lives when they let go of a demand that this or that should be in a particular way or should happen, the moment you completely let go of this inner should, it happens. So only, Jesus said, only be concerned with the kingdom of heaven, which means kingdom of heaven is a strange description he uses to describe the transformed state of consciousness. He has other descriptions for it, the pearl of great price and all kinds of parables pointing to it.

He's talking of only be concerned with finding the essence of who you are, then everything else comes. And he, I believe he said, all the things that you thought you needed will be added unto you because you no longer need them. And of course, those things, they won't stay around forever either, nothing does.

They still have certain limitations, which are the limitations inherent in every form. But it's nice when certain things come for a while. Nice.

And then perhaps goes again, something else comes, forms arise, are born, die. And you are beyond that. So you leave here, change of content, same space, and on the deepest level, it's true to say that you never really go anywhere.

And so phenomenal existence with the world of form, the world of phenomena continues in your life, in the space, the space that you are, different configurations, forms, your life situation, make up your life situation. You may have certain problems in your life, your life situation. The more you access the space of now, the more quickly problematic situations become resolved.

Not by lying awake for hours on end and thinking about them. They don't become resolved. In fact, they don't become resolved through thought.

Thought may be a final form that your realization takes of what the answer is sometimes. But problems do not become resolved through thought. They were actually created by thought in the first place.

So it's only by going beyond thought that the problem suddenly disappears. It may not even become resolved. It disappears from your field of vision.

It may reveal itself to be only a mind form. People carry problems around, many people, that have no existence whatsoever except as a thought form. For example, fear of certain things that may happen to me.

He may leave me, she may leave me. What if this could happen? And this can develop as if it were an actual situation.

And you look more deeply, you see, we pointed at this briefly already. When you look more deeply, you see that the entire existence of the level of human problems are only thought forms. Not reality.

Only a challenge can be there in the reality of now. What are the problems in people's lives? Physical, relationship, financial, finding a life purpose, profession, work problems, and ultimately, all of them, thought forms.

Relationship problem. Let's talk about our relationship problems. Maybe we can work it out.

Yes, up to a limited point, a little bit of talking may be helpful, like pain bodies. But unless presence arises in the relationship, you can't work it out. It's only the arising of space consciousness of presence in the relationship that it can deepen and it can go beyond problems and the need for problems.

And as you know, that begins with listening to your partner when he or she speaks. The art of true listening. Listening in the field of aware presence, open.

Not exclusively focusing on the content when you listen. The words, because then your vision becomes immediately content-based thought. You listen to the words and then your face goes, what do you mean by that?

And immediately the reactive thought forms come up. No, that's completely untrue, I never said that. Why do you always accuse me of that?

Yes, you always do. No, it's not true, I don't always do. There's no listening, there's just true mind forms.

So not exclusively focusing on the form because in true listening, you are there as space. You're not there as form. You can only truly listen if you are there as space, the space in which these words appear and you allow them to appear.

It's again, of course, connected with allowing what is to be completely. So you listen to another person, you are the space in which these words happen. And as you listen, you listen not as a reactive entity, but as receptive space.

And that is the arising of presence, unconditioned consciousness in the relationship. And the words, if words come, are very different. If finally you do say something, those words are very different from words that arise out of the reactivity of the mind.

So to be able to be with each other beyond the movement of thought and not try to solve the so-called problems of the relationship, only on the level of thought. The same applies with not just partner relationships, relationships with children. Space, give the child space.

Be there as space, as spacious presence for the child. But if you're totally identified with a thought form which is father, mother, and you're totally identified with a role which is a thought form, a conditioned thought form, then you interact with a child only through the role of mother or father. And how this role identity thinks a father or mother should behave to be a good father or mother.

And the way they should behave is to tell them what's best for you because I must be, I'm a good father, I'm responsible for you. Do this, don't do that. No, you must do this.

Have you done that? Trying to be good and you get totally identified in the role and then the mother or the father, the father becomes excessively only father. The mother is only mother.

And for the rest of their lives, they can't get out of the role. Then the mother becomes stifling. If you only know yourself as mother without any spaciousness beyond the role,

to be a mother without spaciousness is stifling for the child.

It's narrow. When the child is 30 and you are 60, you will still be in the role of mother and you won't even see that the child is an adult and you'll be calling them up and telling them what's best for them because you are trapped in the role and in a thought form, a conditioned thought form. And so, yes, you are also a mother, you are also a father, but that's a tiny aspect.

That's the form aspect. And any role that you totally slip into and identify with, which is a conditioned thought form, limits you and limits other people. So whatever role you play in life, you will have to play some roles.

That's because on the level of form, we have roles. But to be trapped in a role is to be trapped in thought, in a conditioned thought form. And then you yourself are imprisoned and the role will further imprison other people because it will only interact with other people as roles also because if you are trapped in the role of mother, for example, you will push the child into the role of child and keep the child imprisoned in the role of child until they are 50 and you die and you still imprison them in the role of child as you imprison yourself in the role of mother.

Not that you cannot honor the form of being a mother, but all your profession, you can become a... I've seen people at universities so identified with their role of professor after 30 years, they're totally that. And they speak like a book.

And I sometimes, you can only watch and sometimes wonder, is there anything beyond the role left there? There's such identification with roles. And a few people are able to play their role and yet something that is not conditioned remains as the essence of spaciousness.

And then always remains there's a simplicity that remains, there is a gentleness that remains. You play the role, whatever your profession is, whatever your function in society is, you can honor it, but let it be there in the spaciousness of presence. And then you can be with a child, not exclusively as your role, but you can be there in the child's life as spacious presence and the child comes into that space.

And then you don't talk to the child out of that, like a mother talks to a child, a mother who knows better, of course, a child who always doesn't quite know what's best. No, from spacious presence, all is equal. And you actually speak to the child, words that come out of that are words that are being spoken to an equal and you can listen to the child and be amazed how much wisdom can come off the child's mouth if you can only listen.

Wisdom that if you were exclusively identified with the role, you wouldn't even hear because you are convinced that the child doesn't know and you know because it's the

role of mother to know. And so all relationships never confuse the role with the depths of who that being is and that depth is unconditioned. So the same in business, in many business interactions, people meet as their function, as their role.

It's a prison and it's liberating and people who are not trapped exclusively in the role tend to be much more successful than people who are totally trapped in their role. Everybody loves them. So little human interactions, going to a restaurant, there is a human being playing the role of waiter or waitress and temporarily while you're sitting there, you are playing the role of customer and people slip into these roles the moment they sit at a restaurant table and the waiter imposes the role on you and you impose the role of waiter on him or her.

It's an absurd limitation of yourself and the other person. So can you be there when the waiter comes or the waitress comes? A moment of spacious presence as the waiter or waitress comes into your field of vision and you look and then you honor the role that you are.

You don't have to behave in a weird way. Then you say, I'd like the soup followed by this and that. And the waiter also, the waiter tends to see you as your function there, as your role and then traps you in that.

If a waiter or waitress can be there for the customer also as spacious presence, that is so liberating. As a by-product of that, they would get three times or four times the tips they would otherwise get. That's a little by-product because it is so liberating to be in the presence of presence, the space.

Anybody who comes to you offering space, oh, people may not know why they feel so good. And so it's, everybody's, it's so important not to get trapped in the thought form of roles. Honor them, but be larger than that so that the little role is there, but the unconditioned is known.

And that is actually what true intelligence operates, not through the little role with the conditioned thinking that goes with that role. So in all human interactions, bringing, you are the bringer of space consciousness. It comes naturally with complete yes to what is this moment.

There is, you go beyond the form of this moment. This is how we started off today, saying, knowing the difference between form and formless, between the form as which you appear here and the formless reality that you are. The difference between the form as which I appear here and the formless reality that I am.

I mentioned yesterday, if I saw myself as a spiritual teacher, would be a delusion. It's a temporary form identity. In other words, not really an identity, but simply a function.

And then I walk out and there's no, what teacher? There's a being walking between the

trees. What, there's no teacher left.

Why carry that, I am a spiritual teacher. And then with that would come other illusions. There would come the illusion that people come from different parts of the world to see me.

And that would be the source for ego. It would be ego fuel on the one hand, the self would feel bigger. They have all come to see me.

But on the other hand, there would be hidden fear. I hope I can live up to their expectations of me. I hope, oh my God, all these people have come.

I don't, I'm not ready. I don't know what to say. So you're drawn between feeling bigger and feeling threatened.

And this happens to everybody who is trapped in a form identity. And of course, nobody comes to see me. What for, they come for space, which is themselves.

That's so they come because there happens to be an empty space here. And then they recognize themselves in that. And so the empty space within them, the unconditioned consciousness arises.

That's why they come, not to see a person. So knowing the difference between the form that arises in the now and the depths or the space of now. And in this life, there are the two dimensions.

The dimensions of form, which, in which there seems to be time and the dimension of the formless. And most humans are lost in form in this world. You don't need to learn more about form.

You can, the world is full of learning about form. Universities are full of form knowledge, but essence, the world is hungry to know that which is beyond form, because that's the liberation from being trapped in form, physical forms, but more importantly, trapped in thought forms, conceptualized identities of me, which link into certain physical things, make thought forms out of them. And then you carry that role, that conceptualized identity around with you.

And it's never at ease for long, always incomplete, uneasy, fearful, needing more. I need more followers. I want people to follow me.

Just come and follow me. I need more. Enron Corporation, we need more capital, more money, more.

In an absurd attempt of the ego to complete itself. So this is the madness of the level of form when you only know that. When you know that which is beyond form, the world of form is quite okay.

Okay. Actually, quite nice. Beautiful.

There's a dance that goes on. The dance of form, of phenomenal, which you experience as you walk away from here. This place of now is filled with other forms and the dance continues.

So the essence of our retreat is not something that is now going to recede into the past. The form of this retreat as an experience is about to move into past and become a thought form as all forms do, future, present, and it's gone. The essence doesn't move.

This gathering was not about experiencing certain interesting events on the level of form, even though one or two of you may have done that. The essence of this is to see that which is deeper than content. Sense perception and thought and emotion.

Spaciousness, stillness, aware presence. Thank you for making this retreat possible. There would be no teaching without you.

The ancient saying says, the teacher and the taught together produce the teaching. It's a single process. Ultimately, it comes out of you.

Ultimately, you just recognized what you already knew, of course. Teaching comes out of you. Thank you.

Thank you to Marina for organizing this and Christina and Kim and helpers. Many people have helped to make this happen. Enjoy what comes into the field of now and you are not what happens.

You're the space in which it happens. As long as you know that, there's no problem. There can't be.